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You may freely download and use this work to support any work intended to support ending political division, mitigating affective polarization, ending the use of MinVoting methods (i.e. Plurality and ranked-choice voting), or promoting the instituting of MaxVoting and its methods (i.e. approval voting, score voting, STAR voting, majority judgment voting, vote 3-2-1, etc. de-polarization work).

Tedman Getschman, June 21, 2026

To Jack, Tenley, Auden, Sawyer, Plexlie, and all of Gen Z and beyond;

I hope you become as excited about your future as I am.

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Introduction

If you want to end political division and the two-party system, I've got great news: you can.

If you want to ensure your representatives are always seeking your voice and really hearing you, you can.

If you want to end gerrymandering, dark money in politics (manipulative campaign financing, influence money, questionable contributions, or contributions designed to support specific agendas), you can do that too.

I'm going to show you how to do all of that, without anyone having to learn a new skill, change their behavior, or compromise their beliefs. By the end of this book, you're going to know how to create the life, community, and future you want. It's not hard to do. In fact, it's simple.

However, at this point in our journey together, that probably sounds too good to be true, or even impossible to achieve, especially if you are someone who has been working for years to make it happen. *If it were that simple, why hasn't someone done it already?*

Over the last few decades, we have learned a lot about public choice, and, ultimately, everything needs to start somewhere. So, the end of our democratic dark age is starting now, perhaps with you.

In all honesty, it's only simple if you know how to look at the problem—if you see it through the right lens—that of the public opinion curve—which is what I'm going to show you how to do. Without this lens, you will likely not see the answer, and what we need to do will certainly not be obvious. Without this lens, there is a strong possibility that what you believe should solve these problems will actually make them worse. I will show you this lens, and you'll gain a new perspective on what is happening across our nation today.

The Pain Is Real

I still remember that morning, standing in the shower getting ready for work. My wife comes into the bathroom, clearly distressed. She holds a Master's in Greek and Latin, is a mother of four, and a military spouse for over twenty-five years.

She manages to choke out, "I think he's going to win." It's November 4, 2016. I'm stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, at the US European Command Headquarters. I am a Foreign Area Officer, someone who works with other nations' governments and militaries, helping to plan our military relationships. It has become clear to us that Donald Trump will be the next President of the United States. My wife had been excited about Hillary Clinton becoming our first female president. When the election results came in, she felt betrayed. She believes that the worst possible fate has just befallen the nation, that America has rejected its best hope for the future, and that, instead of the promised time of enlightenment and progress, we face an impending age of ignorance and intolerance. For her, one candidate represented hope, the other, horror.

Shortly after, I am speaking to my mother on the phone. My mother is a former high school and middle school English teacher who also taught English in Tanzania with the Peace Corps. She had served in almost every capacity in our local First United Methodist Church, from lay leader to bell-ringer. The relief I hear in her voice at the outcome of that same election is palpable. She was thankful that Donald Trump had won. She felt the United States had just dodged a bullet. Hillary was clearly a criminal, an elitist career politician, a skillful liar and manipulator, and out of touch with the regular people. Our bloated system of government, the corruption and lobbying, the "swamp" of DC,¹ could now effectively be addressed by a proven

¹ Staff, TIME. "Donald Trump Cabinet: Is He Really Draining the Swamp?" *Time*, January 18, 2017. <https://time.com/donald-trump-drain-swamp/>.

and capable leader with real business experience. For her, one candidate represented hope, while the other represented horror.

The same election. The same candidates. Two completely different viewpoints by two people who have so much in common.

Why are our elections almost always all-or-nothing events that seem to leave us all with nothing?

Why must it always be that one candidate is a saint and the other a scoundrel?

In this book, I will share the answers to those questions.

Since 2021, I have been a member of Braver Angels, an organization that teaches how to see those on the other side of the political spectrum not as villains or as the “duped” but as people with different opinions and ideas—valuable people. I have heard from attendees of our workshops about broken families and lost friendships. Some have siblings, parents, or children they no longer speak to because of political differences. I have heard them express their agonizing frustration with what they see happening in our government (both under Biden and Trump). And many in our country see the looming potential of a civil war.²

But I have my own stories as well. My wife and her brother, who were raised in the same house by the same parents, no longer speak to each other due to political differences.

Braver Angels is a powerful tool for those willing to embrace it and use it, but it requires people to come to it. I have found that many Americans are very happy and comfortable with their righteous ire at the other side. They have no desire to hear other viewpoints, because they “know they are right.” I have come to see Braver Angels as a balm, but not a cure. I believe any

² YouGov, “YouGov Survey: Dire Political Scenarios,” accessed September 24, 2024, 2, https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/Dire_Political_Scenarios_poll_results.pdf. (13% of survey respondents said very likely, 24% said somewhat likely.)

potential solution to our division cannot require people to change who they are, learn and employ new skills, or change how they think.

What does it require? MaxVoting, which I will explain in full throughout this book. I believe that MaxVoting, and MaxVoting alone, can *end* our political division.

A Society Free of Political Division

What would a society free of political division look like?

We have heard about making America great again. We think nostalgically of the times gone by when things were better, when we were less divided. But I would argue that much of that view of our history is fiction. Since 1776, we have been divided and fighting ourselves. We imagine a pristine past, but I don't believe we have ever glimpsed that America, how great America can truly become—not tyrannical, not dominating, but great: a blessing to ourselves and all the world. I do not believe we have any idea how powerful, just, supportive, productive, welcoming, resilient, inclusive, innovative, and entrepreneurial the United States can be, that every democracy can be, if we can end political division. This is not about recovering a mythic time gone by; it's about ending a democratic dark age and beginning, for the first time in history, a *golden* age of democracy.

Imagine disagreeing with your neighbor or child on an immigration policy, but then voting for the same candidate because you both believe they would be best at creating a better immigration policy. And what is that “better” policy built on? Your opinion, which all candidates actively seek. Why? Because that is how they win elections. The same happens on gun legislation, foreign policy, local zoning laws, and everything that matters to you. Imagine your

elections becoming about choosing the best candidate to represent you, rather than choosing which half of the political spectrum gets represented.

Imagine representatives who have neither the ability nor the desire to gerrymander. If they could do it, it would only make their job harder and their re-election less secure. But they can't do it, because they don't have the "majority" needed to pass such legislation.

Imagine politicians and political elites avoiding manipulative campaign financing in elections, not because it is "bad," or they have high morals, but because it makes them less able to get elected, because it is a bad investment for those offering the money, even if the public were to remain unaware of the transaction.

Imagine a government that focuses on solving your problems, not fighting each other, and not tearing down what the other party created. Instead, a government is moving consistently forward on the path laid out by the people.

Imagine a nation resilient to those, both within and without, who seek to divide us.

Imagine political parties having no relevance in our elections.

You can choose this future if you want it, and I'm going to show you how.

The Tools for Revealing MaxVoting

I'm going to offer you the tools to see and understand us as a group. That group may be your city, your county, your state, or we, the American people. Using those tools, you will come to understand why our division is not a people problem. We will talk about why you, the authentic and uncensored you, are invaluable to the rest of us. You will understand why you are *not* the problem and how attempts to change you to become a better listener, more compromising, or

more accommodating will not help us, though they may help you personally. You will see why so many efforts today to create a more representative government are doomed to fail. You will discover the worst truths about our current election system, and how *a majority* is not the same as *the majority opinion*.

These tools will also lead you to the answer of how to end political division. You will uncover the winning strategies of candidates and understand why they will actively seek out what you have to say, regardless of what you're saying and how it will shape their political platform. You will understand how political parties in elections will lose relevance, how gerrymandering will disappear along with illicit money in politics and government gridlock. The cause and cure of our political division will become obvious to you.

By the end of this book, you will understand how we can replace division-driven politics with a system where leaders truly reflect the will of the governed and where your voice is not only heard, but actively sought in shaping your community's future. You will understand both the cause and the cure of our political division.

It is critical for you to recognize that this cure *does not* require anyone, including you, to change their beliefs or their behavior. This book is not about how we can become kinder, develop more empathy, or find common ground. Those things are great, but, I believe, ultimately, cannot end political division, because their lack did not cause it in the first place.

Neither is this a book about blame. No person, movement, group, event, or organization, now or in our past, has intentionally inflicted this upon us (even if they believe they did). Our division comes not by design but by default.

You may think this is impossible. Perhaps it sounds like I'm saying we can "end unhappiness." Maybe you believe we have too many bad people in positions of power who will

work to keep us divided for their own benefit. Or perhaps you think our current political dysfunction stems from human nature, and we just can't get along. In this book, I'm going to challenge those ideas.

Chapter 1 introduces the problem. We examine what political division truly is, how it manifests in our history and current moment, and why it leaves so many Americans feeling ignored and unheard. By exploring past uprisings, electoral volatility, and the forces that shape candidate behavior, we begin to question whether our conflict is simply human nature or the product of rules we rarely see. This chapter lays the foundation for the possibility that political division is not permanent, but solvable.

In Chapter 2, I'm going to give you an initial glimpse of how ending political division could be possible by taking you through a brief thought experiment. In that experiment, you get to role-play a candidate who has to develop a winning election strategy.

But before we can fully understand how to build that winning strategy, you will need to understand better why you, as a member of society, are so important (Chapter 3) and how we can best see ourselves as a group (Chapter 4). With these new building blocks, we can identify how we can ensure candidates end up with winning strategies that require them to listen to all of their voters and support their voters' majority opinions on all the issues.

Chapter 5 returns us to the present day and breaks down some of the fallacies that we have previously embraced that keep us divided, such as the idea that by changing how we act toward one another, we can end political division.

Chapter 6 uses all the tools and building blocks we have created to explicitly call out what I believe is the real reason for our political division. We discover the rules of the game that have forced us to form two antagonistic political factions.

Chapter 7 exposes just how bad our current default system is. If you think the fact that our current system relentlessly pushes us into civil war was bad, it gets worse.

In Chapter 8 and 9, we return to the winning strategies you discovered in Chapter 4 which require candidates to listen and support you, and we see why these strategies do and must work in all elections. It is here that we can finally fully grasp the idea that what matters is what the candidates do, not the voters.

Chapter 10 examines these solutions in the real world, and in Chapter 11, we imagine what a world free of political division could look like.

In Chapter 12, I will show you how to choose that golden age, if you want it. And *regardless* of what you choose, you will, (at last) make an informed choice on whether or not to keep our society divided.

Ending political division does not mean...

- Freeing us from disagreement and argument. But it does free us from the threat of civil war.
- Relationships with your parents, children, or friends, if political issues have strained them, will instantly heal. But it does provide the space to begin that healing.
- Political parties will cease to exist, either. But I do think their character will change and gridlock in government will be reduced, if not eliminated.
- People won't still *try* to divide us. But it does make that weapon far more challenging to wield and far less effective than it is today.

- Requiring anyone to change their mind on any issue. I believe that not only will you be able to speak out for what you believe, but your representatives will seek out *your* voice, earnestly wanting to hear what you have to say.

As I see it, ending political division does not force us to find a political middle ground, common ground, or compromise. We do not need to listen better to each other, become more civil, or caring, as laudable and valuable as those goals are. I have found no requirement for us to stop acting like the humans we are and have always been. We don't need to become "better;" we are, today, exactly what our nation needs.

Why this book

This book makes my case for why the use of MaxVoting ends political division; what it is, how it works, and why I am so sure it will. I wrote it because, despite a plethora of books on division, voting, polarization, and reform, my simple idea, that MinVoting causes our political division and MaxVoting cures it, is absent from it all.

This book came about from my study of political division, not voting or voting methods. Truth be told, voting methods don't interest me much. However, since my research led me to conclude that our division flows from the voting methods we use, I will spend a lot of this book talking about them.

I'm mentioning this in hopes of keeping you from getting distracted. I believe that discussing what makes a voting method "good," "fair," etc. is a *distraction* from the issue; what we can do right now to create an age of democracy the likes of which the world has never seen.

If you want to learn about voting methods, find another book. If you want to end the use of a two-party system, the forced creation of a ruling majority and an ignored minority, the

leverage our enemies, both foreign and domestic, hold to divide us, and our dysfunctional government, keep reading; I have great news for you.

The Straight Lines of our Enemy

During my twenty-eight years as an officer in the US Navy, we were taught to perceive unnatural things, like straight lines in nature. Straight lines are extremely rare in the natural world. When you see them, you look for the muzzle of a rifle or the outline of a tank. I also studied aircraft mishaps as a naval aviation safety officer. There we learned to identify patterns, finding evidence of core causes that explained seemingly unrelated details.

I had the opportunity to live in four different countries, work with ten more, and visit countless others. Everywhere I have gone, the vast majority of people have been kind, welcoming, and caring. From China to Curaçao, Bali to Bahrain, Germany to Kenya, I have found people to be amiable and social, preferring to be helpful and get on with their business rather than trying to harm others or create mischief. Certainly, there are criminals and ne'er-do-wells, but I have found them to be the minor exception. Considering this, how we act when it comes to politics, fearing our neighbors, and fighting our families feels off to me.

Think about what we are currently experiencing. We have over three hundred million people in the United States³ but only two major political parties? And those parties are of roughly equal size?⁴ But are not aligned to any physical, geographical, or biological

³ United States Census Bureau, "2020 Census Apportionment Results Delivered to the President," press release, April 26, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/2020-census-apportionment-results.html>.

⁴ "Party Affiliation," Gallup, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>. (These polls only go back to 1988,

characteristic of the population? With neither party able to dominate the other? And with no major third party able to emerge? And this condition has existed since almost the nation's founding?

To me, this feels *very* unnatural, a straight line right down the middle of our country and history.

I took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. It appears to me that a country guided by the will of its people has the greatest chance of long-term stability, peace, and success; people cannot rise in revolt if they are the ones calling the shots. You may think that describes America today, but if the American people were in charge, why did we have a civil war in 1861, and why does every election feel like we are walking up to that same precipice? I have come to see our political division as the Achilles' heel of our democracy. Even if no other nation could defeat us, we could easily, and with the purest of intentions, defeat ourselves.

After transitioning out of the navy, I continued to work closely with the US Defense Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense/War. From my work in intelligence, I can personally attest to how easy it is for our adversaries to reach into the political cracks of our society and rend us apart.

During the runup to the 2020 and 2024 elections, I had ringside seats to watch how nations who wished us ill-used social media to inflame our political divisions. I can't divulge

but considering the percentages of elected representatives or the party of the elected president, the two main political parties appear to be equal in size and political strength.)

details, but media outlets have reported on these activities.⁵ These polarizing agencies use social media and websites to blast the political views of the other side. They carried stories designed to hit all the right emotional tones, feeding the echo chambers of those who already knew they were right. But these foreign powers only exacerbated our political division, they did not create it.

In addition to being a naval officer and intelligence professional, I am a professional board game designer. I used that experience to examine the issue of our political division as a game, played by candidates and representatives with the goal of getting elected. What did they have to do to give themselves the best chance of winning, and what rules lay behind their calculus? This appears to be a relatively unique way of approaching this problem. And it was by using this approach, I came to see a way forward, one small change that could change everything. In MaxVoting I saw a way to change the rules of the game that would fundamentally change the winning strategies the candidates needed to employ.

This book explains what I discovered.

My goal in writing this book was to fulfill my oath and mission to support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, and I put our own political division at the top of that list of enemies. I don't want my children to live in fear of the potential outcome of an election. I don't want them to feel powerless and impotent to make their world better. I don't want them to be saddled with a dysfunctional government incapable of thinking past the next election.

I don't want them to stop talking to each other.

I don't want them to stop talking to me.

⁵ Reuters, "Russian Meddlers Reportedly Posed as Rightwing News Site to Target US Voters." The Guardian, October 1, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/01/russian-election-interference-us-voters-2016>.

But my effort toward ending political division is limited. I can only offer what I know to you. If America is to be united with every American heard, then the American people, not little Teddy Getschman, must decide that is what they want and then make it happen. It comes down to a choice.

I chose to write this book.

What will your choice be?

Chapter 1: Your Future Can Be Brighter than You Know

Political Division and You

What do I mean by political division?

Ashli Babbitt joined the US Air Force right out of high school. She deployed multiple times to war zones in both Iraq and Afghanistan. After her enlistment ended, she chose to continue serving her nation in the Air National Guard.⁶ While stationed in Maryland, she became a member of the 113th Security Forces Squadron of the District of Columbia Air National Guard, also known as the Capital Guardians, a specialized unit responsible for maintaining the safety of the nation's capital during times of civil unrest.⁷ She even adopted retired military working dogs.⁸

After leaving the military, Ashli returned to her family in California, where they started a business. But the business struggled.⁹ Ashli struggled. Moreover, she witnessed her community

⁶ BBC News, "Ashli Babbitt: The US Veteran Shot Dead Breaking into the Capitol," January 8, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-55581206>.

⁷ 113th Wing, "Who We Are," accessed August 5, 2024, <https://www.113wg.ang.af.mil/aboutus/>.

⁸ Andrew, "Air Force Veteran Killed During Capitol Protests," *San Francisco News*, January 11, 2021, <https://www.thesfnews.com/air-force-veteran-killed-during-capitol-protests/72183>.

⁹ Adam Goldman and Shaila Dewan, "Inside the Deadly Capitol Shooting," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210123180006/https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/23/us/capitol-police-shooting-ashli-babbitt.html>.

struggle.¹⁰ She and those around her faced significant challenges, and she felt their representatives were not listening to them.¹¹ She grew so angry that she began making videos of herself, yelling at the camera, "Our economy is going to take an absolute tank, because you guys refuse to choose America, America over your stupid political party."¹²

Ashli consumed a steady stream of political tirades and QAnon posts, which wove stories of a satanic cabal that had masterminded Donald Trump's 2020 electoral defeat.¹³ Ashli had sworn an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and now her life, her environment, and her media identified who those enemies were.

Ashli was the kind of person who took action to make things better; she was an activist. She traveled from California to DC to join a protest of the 2020 election results at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021¹⁴. She released tweets and posts stating how she felt as if she

¹⁰ Goldman and Dewan, "Inside the Deadly Capitol Shooting."

¹¹ Goldman, "Inside the Deadly Capitol Shooting."

¹² The Space Coast Rocket, "Ashli Babbitt, (woman shot and killed at riot in DC) Angry Rant," *YouTube*, January 7, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGthb6ZKpjjg>.

¹³ Stephen Losey, "Woman Shot and Killed at Capitol Was Security Forces Airman, QAnon Adherent," *Air Force Times*, August 19, 2022, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2021/01/07/woman-shot-and-killed-at-capitol-was-security-forces-airman-qanon-adherent/>.

¹⁴ Goldman,, "Inside the Deadly Capitol Shooting."

was part of a storm that would turn “dark to light.”¹⁵ At one point, she was physically lifted onto the shoulders of her fellow protesters to climb through a window into the House Speaker’s Lobby. As she started to enter, she was shot dead by a member of the Capitol Police.¹⁶

Ashli’s not the hero of this story, nor is she the villain. She’s a glaring example of how divided our nation has become. She illustrates what I mean by political division.

Think for a moment about what you have heard from your friends and family, and what you have seen on your social media and news. Do you feel that you live in a united country? Do you feel your voice will be heard by your representatives regardless of what you have to say; regardless of what, if any, political party you belong to? Do you feel that your government seeks to understand and support you, your group, your generation, your gender, your hard work, your industry, avoids turning you into a label or a scapegoat, ignored until they need you for a sound bite or tweet? Do you feel, unlike Ashli did,¹⁷ that your elected leaders represent more than their party?

¹⁵ Graeber, Dan, “Ashli Babbitt, Shot during DC Protest, Was an Air Force Veteran,” *International Business Times*, January 7, 2021.

<https://www.ibtimes.com/who-ashli-babbitt-capitol-attack-shooting-victim-was-air-force-veteran-3116772>.

¹⁶ US Attorney’s Office, District of Columbia, “Department of Justice Closes Investigation into the Death of Ashli Babbitt,” press release on April 14, 2021,

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/departments-justice-closes-investigation-death-ashli-babbitt>.

¹⁷ Goldman, “Inside the Deadly Capitol Shooting.”

Ashli was (and is) not alone. There were thousands of “Ashlis” at the January 6, 2021, protest, and thousands more cheered them on from home. The need to protest in order to ensure one’s voice is heard is not restricted to one side or part of the political spectrum. Recent actions such as the Women’s March in 2017, the March for Our Lives in 2018, the School Strike for Climate in 2019, the Black Lives Matter movement, and “No Kings Day” in 2025 are all part of our American story. Protests like this always have been.

And we are seeing these events regularly occur in a society that has already demonstrated it can and will resort to civil war. The American Civil War resulted in almost seven hundred thousand deaths,¹⁸ 2% of our population at that time,¹⁹ by means of muskets, and bayonets. Today, the US population numbers over 330 million. And who uses muskets and bayonets anymore?

I believe that for people to get along they need to have, and recognize they have, control over their lives, to have a say in what happens to them; I believe this is even more culturally true for Americans. And when we think we do not have that control, when we think those in power won’t listen, we raise the volume so they can’t ignore us. We turn to revolt, rebellion, and revolution. Today, we feel we must fight to be heard, fight to avoid being controlled, fight our fellow Americans for control over our own lives.

Today, I see ignored Americans and a divided America.

¹⁸ Barceló, Joan, Jeffrey L Jensen, Leonid Peisakhin, and Haoyu Zhai, “New Estimates of US Civil War Mortality from Full-Census Records,” *PNAS*, November 18, 2024, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/pdf/10.1073/pnas.2414919121>.

¹⁹ “Civil War Casualties,” American Battlefield Trust, September 15, 2023, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-casualties>.

Political Division Isn't New

“I regret that election as much as you can possibly do [...] But he was elected, and I deem it the duty of every good citizen to submit. Revolution can only be justified, when evils too great to bear crowd upon us. If the election of a President is cause for revolution for the defeated party, we have no government. If our government must quietly submit to secession whenever anything disagreeable occurs to a particular section, then Union is but a rope of sand, and not worth preserving.”²⁰

That is a quote from a letter to the editor of the *Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, North Carolina), from Wednesday, February 13, 1861.

We've been here before. In fact, I would say this is our home address; politically divided, since our nation's founding.

People say our division grows worse²¹, but January 6, 2021, wasn't our first uprising. Our nation's history is filled with them:

- Shays's Rebellion—1786²²

²⁰ *Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, NC), February 13, 1861,

<https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83045706/1861-02-13/ed-1/>, image 4, column 6, bottom third.

²¹ Boxell, Levi, Matthew Gentzkow, and Jesse M Shapiro, “NBER Working Paper Series Cross-Country Trends in Affective Polarization,” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, November 1, 2021, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26669/w26669.pdf, Conclusion, pg 11.

²² “Shays' Rebellion,” [ushistory.org](https://www.ushistory.org), accessed September 23, 2024,

<https://www.ushistory.org/us/15a.asp>.

- The Whiskey Rebellion—1794²³
- Fries's Rebellion--1799²⁴
- The German Coast Uprising—1811²⁵
- Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion—1831²⁶
- The Antirent War—1839²⁷
- Dorr Rebellion—1842²⁸
- Taos Revolt—1847²⁹

²³ Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

²⁴ Charles Adams, *Those Dirty Rotten Taxes: The Tax Revolts That Built America* (New York: Free Press, 1998).

²⁵ Nathan A. Buman, "To Kill Whites: The 1811 Louisiana Slave Insurrection," Louisiana State University, August 2008, 32–33, 37, 51, 58.

²⁶ William Gerald McLoughlin, "Slave Holding and Antislavery Efforts, 1846–1855," in *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty, 1839–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 121–53.

²⁷ Dorothy Kubik,, *A Free Soil—A Free People: The Anti-Rent War in Delaware County*, (New York, 1997).

²⁸ Jonathan Hiles, "The Dorr Rebellion and the Social Contract of Political Equality," *Rhode Island History* 70, no. 2 (2012): 47–73.

²⁹ James A. Crutchfield, *Tragedy at Taos: The Revolt of 1847* (Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press, 1995).

- Raid on Harpers Ferry—1859³⁰
- The American Civil War—1861
- The New York City Draft Riots—1863³¹
- Battle of Liberty Place—1874³²
- Election Riot of 1874³³
- Greenwood Insurrection—1882³⁴
- Wilmington Coup and Massacre—1898³⁵

³⁰ Tony Horwitz, *Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid That Sparked the Civil War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011).

³¹ James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 360.

³² Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Encyclopedia of Casualty and Other Figures, 1492–2015*, 4th ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2017), 251.

³³ “Ambushed in Eufaula: Alabama’s Forgotten Race Massacre,” AL.com, January 16, 2022, accessed January 29, 2022.

³⁴ “Steuben County Troubles: Why the Town of Greenwood Was Declared in a State of Insurrection,” New York Times, February 16, 1882, 1.

³⁵ Leon H. Prather, Sr., “We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay,” in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, ed. David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15–41.

- The Green Corn Rebellion—1917³⁶
- The Battle of Blair Mountain—1921³⁷
- Battle of Athens—1946³⁸
- The San Juan Nationalist Revolt—1950³⁹
- The Black Power Movement—1960s
- The Red Power Movement—1960s⁴⁰
- Occupation of Alcatraz—1969,⁴¹
- Attica Prison Riot—1971⁴²

³⁶ Garin Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976).

³⁷ Abby Lee Hood, "What Made the Battle of Blair Mountain the Largest Labor Uprising in American History," *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 25, 2021.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/battle-blair-mountain-largest-labor-uprising-american-history-180978520/>.

³⁸ Lones Seiber, "The Battle of Athens," *American Heritage*, February–March 1985.

³⁹ Nelson Antonio Denis, *War Against All Puerto Ricans: Revolution and Terror in America's Colony* (New York: Nation Books, 2015).

⁴⁰ Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *Red Power: The Native Americans' Fight for Freedom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

⁴¹ Casey Ryan Kelly, "Détournement, Decolonization, and the American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969–1971)," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2014): 168–190.

⁴² Tom Robbins, "Revisiting the Ghosts of Attica," *The Marshall Project*, September 9, 2016.

- The Occupation of Catalina Island—1972⁴³
- Cliven Bundy’s Standoff—2014
- The Occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge—2016, and
- The Capitol Hill Occupied Protest—2020

Our history is the story of a people who, when feeling ignored, raised the volume. When one party comes to power, the other is silenced; the ruling majority rules an ignored minority.

The idea that our politics were more civil in the past appears to be more fantasy than reality. Jon Grinspan’s book, *The Age of Acrimony: How Americans Fought to Fix Their Democracy, 1865–1915*, showcases the violence, shootings, riots, and bombastic speeches that have characterized—and continue to characterize—American politics. Politicians gave stump speeches armed with pistols⁴⁴, which were sometimes put to use.⁴⁵ Prefilled ballots, poll intimidation, and fraud were common election activities of our past.⁴⁶ “The on-the-ground race in 1884 was as big and baroque as any in American history,” Grinspan writes. “[D]epictions of midnight marches show faux-knights marching through smoke-hazed streets, explosions overhead, their visors down and their torch-axes aloft. Real weapons supplemented the tin axes:

⁴³ Ariella Markowitz, “The Forgotten Occupation of Catalina Island,” *KQED*, August 14, 2020, accessed April 22, 2022.

⁴⁴ Jon Grinspan, *The Age of Acrimony: How Americans Fought to Fix Their Democracy, 1865–1915* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 182.

⁴⁵ Grinspan, *The Age of Acrimony*, 31.

⁴⁶ Grinspan, *The Age of Acrimony*, 90.

to help monitor a particularly rough race in Cincinnati, the Republican National Committee shipped six hundred British bulldog revolvers to hastily deputized poll watchers.”⁴⁷

For reasons which may seem unfathomable to you now (but I believe will become obvious by the end of this book), we have divided ourselves into two, *and only two*, major political parties that alternate their control of the nation back and forth.⁴⁸ How often have we seen the newly arrived administration reverse the policies of the former, just to have their own policies dismantled? Our national direction appears to swerve back and forth between liberal and conservative like a drunk trying to find their way home—staggering aimlessly down a street, moving forward at times, but not toward any discernible goal.

We don’t seek to elect presidents to fight against half our population; however, the historical average of the popular vote received by the winning US presidential candidate is 51.2%.⁴⁹ This means that, on average, just under half of our nation’s voters did not vote for the winning president, and, as we shall soon see, getting 51% of the vote is no guarantee that over half of the voters even desired the winning candidate. And that fact has nothing to do with systems such as the Electoral College.

When our elected leaders represent just half of the US population, whether on the political left or the right, they spend much of their time fighting the other half, attacking the

⁴⁷ Grinspan, *The Age of Acrimony*, 152.

⁴⁸ “United States Presidential Election Results,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed September 23, 2024,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Presidential-Election-Results-1788863>.

⁴⁹ “United States Presidential Election Results,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified July 23, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Presidential-Election-Results-1788863>.

representatives on the opposing side, whom we, as a people, have also elected. How can it be rational that we elect leaders to represent us in fighting against the representatives we elected?

I do not believe we are experiencing the promise of a constitutional federal republic. If the goal was to have a peaceful transition of power, why do elections represent some of the most volatile points in our history? And *if the people are truly in power, from whom and to whom is power being transferred?*

Political Division and Me

While serving as a US Naval Officer and as a Foreign Affairs Officer with the US European Command Headquarters, I had the opportunity to travel to Azerbaijan and meet some of our military staff from the Embassy as well as from the Azeri armed forces in Baku. We had various programs and projects that we did with the Azeri. However, as we were getting close to the 2016 elections, decisions on the funding we were seeking for these programs were in flux, as we did not know what a potentially new administration would desire. One of our Azeri counterparts shook his head at hearing our explanation for delays and asked us, “Why don’t you know what you will be doing next year?” We again explained our elections and how we had to wait and see. He retorted that this is the problem with America, we never know what we will do, even in the next year. Then one of our team members threw out Churchill’s chestnut, “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms...” Our Azeri counterpart had an insightful response. “Really,” he said, “We know what we’re going to do, next year, and the year after that, and the year after that. The Russians know what they are going to do twenty years from now. The Chinese know what they are going to do fifty years from now.” He had a point.

Svetlana Alexievich's book, *Secondhand Time*, consists of a collection of interviews of individuals who lived in Russia through the time of the Soviet Union's transformation from Stalin in the 1950s, through perestroika, glasnost, collapse, capitalism, nascent democracy, and finally to Putin in the early 2000s. Two things remain with me to this day from that book. The first was the amount of suffering experienced by the people of the Soviet Union. Her book told stories of families crowded in kitchens, always wondering if their discussions were being overheard.⁵⁰ Svetlana included a story of a woman who was arrested. Before she was sent away, she asked her neighbor and friend to care for her 5-year-old daughter. The neighbor did so. The daughter began to call the neighbor Mama. Some 17 years later, the woman returned and was reunited with her daughter. When Gorbachev came to power, the archives were unsealed, and the woman learned it had been this same neighbor who had raised her daughter who had informed on her. The woman went home and hanged herself.⁵¹

The second thing that stuck with me about that book was how much the people in Russia in the early 2000s so desperately wanted to *return* to that communism. They thought longingly of the days of Stalin when they knew what to expect, what to do, and how to work within that system. They could plan. They could anticipate. In this new world, they were lost, unable to navigate the uncertainties of their own society. Would they have a job? Would they have a home?

⁵⁰ Svetlana Aleksievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, trans. Bela Shayevich (New York: Random House, 2017), 15.

⁵¹ Aleksievich, *Secondhand Time*, 55.

It was chaos, and it aligned completely with what the Azeri colonel had said. People crave stability and predictability.

Ask yourself this, in the United States, does the will of the people change dramatically every two years, or four years. Think of your own beliefs on the issues that matter to you. How often do those views flip-flop and change? Every four years? Every eight years? Our beliefs and convictions change but not with the high-speed chopping and shifting demonstrated by political parties. How can the direction of our leaders be so much more volatile than the American people if the American people are really the basis of the American government?

I believe that the reason why our elections are so contentious is that everything rides on them. They decide who will be represented and who will be forgotten for the next few years. Given what is at stake, it's no wonder they bring the match to the powder keg.

I have come to view our most recent elections as unoriginal. The rancor in these elections is no more caustic than elections of the past, but it is no *less* caustic either. The shootings, the protests, and the sporting-rival like mayhem, not to the same degree in every election, not in every city, of course, but we have seen it all before. And I believe we will see it all again, and again, and again.

At least, that's one possible future for us, but it is not the only one.

As a board game designer, I strive to understand player motivations and how they evolve when the rules of the game are altered. When you watch a game like chess, if you don't know the rules of how players are allowed to move pieces, the game makes little sense. Maybe the knight could easily capture the pawn right before it, but the player doesn't make this obvious move. Why? You may think the player is stupid for not seeing it or attribute nefarious motives like they're trying to lose or spare the pawn. But the truth is that the rules prohibit it.

The rules not only dictate how the game is played but also what shape the winning strategies need to take. Whenever I'm designing a game, I must know how my rules guide the players, enabling me to avoid unforeseen consequences. When I started to explore inconsistencies in our public character, I took the path of trying to uncover the rules that guide the players, the candidates, to adopt disparate and confrontational political platforms.

Few of us view political division as beneficial, but our candidates still adopt platforms that divide us. Why?

However, the rules governing candidate behavior in elections are not immediately apparent. In our physical world, we experience gravity regardless of whether or not we understand it. Understanding why we experience gravity is much more difficult than experiencing it. Likewise, candidates experience forces that influence their behavior, whether or not they understand the reasons behind these influences. My research sought out those reasons. I wondered, *if we changed the rules, could we change those influences, change how candidates play the game?*

Political Division Is Solvable

We can declare political division ended when every candidate and representative listens to the authentic voice of every voter and supports their voters' majority opinions. This *is* possible...I'm going to show you how by taking you through a thought experiment in Chapter 2.

Ready to get started?

Chapter 2: Seeing You

Running Unopposed

Imagine you are running for political office, say, the position of Mayor. You really want this job. Why? Because of the amazing parking space that comes with it.

The parking spot is breathtakingly beautiful. It has an awning to keep the sun, rain, and bird poop off your car. It sits right next to the entrance of the legislature building, with plenty of room to open your car doors all the way. The lines have been recently repainted in a gorgeous, joyous, high-visibility yellow. You will do whatever it takes to get elected, because you really, really want that parking spot. What I'm going for here is the idea that candidates want to win--why isn't important to us.

To win office, you must win an election. Enough people must say "yes" to you, and believe you are the best choice to represent them. You create a political platform to help people understand what will guide you in developing solutions for the community, how you will choose between options, and what your position will be on the issues. Each voter will then consider how closely that platform matches their own beliefs and opinions in deciding whether or not to vote for you.

In this election, however, you are the only candidate. The ballot would have an election race listed, and under it, one name: yours. Next to that would be a block people could mark (or not), or it could be a chad that could be punched out.

Mayor
You <input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 1}

All you need is one vote. If you vote for yourself, you win. What is your winning strategy when it comes to selecting your political platform? Do you need a political platform? Do you care about what your voters want? Do you need to listen to any of them? Do the voters even have a reason to vote? Whether they love, hate, or don't care about you, they literally can't change the outcome of the election.

Maybe you do care about the voters (and you likely do), and maybe you would try to determine what the people want and deliver it to them. But what if you thought you already knew what was best for them? Or you didn't care? Under these circumstances, how much does your political platform matter? Regardless of whether or not *you* would try to create a platform that voters would support, the system, the game, does not require you to.

None Of The Above

But here comes a wrinkle. "None Of The Above" enters as a candidate. Now the election ballot would show the mayoral election race with two names under it: yours and None Of The Above. Voters would be able to either mark the box next to your name or "None Of The Above."

Mayor	
choose one	
You	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 2}

But this is not the same "None Of The Above" you are likely used to. This None Of The Above can *win* the election. And if None Of The Above wins, the election is thrown out, rerun sixty days later, and you will not be allowed to be a candidate in that re-run of the election. In short, you now have one shot and one shot only at getting elected. And to win, more voters must prefer you over None Of The Above.

None Of The Above has some definite advantages over you. First, it has universal appeal. Anyone on the political left or right can happily vote for None Of The Above if they don't want you.

But you have an advantage as well. None Of The Above does not come for free. If None Of The Above wins, that population must now *pay* for another election: ballot printing, reviewing, public notices, voting booth management, and more. Plus, the voters would have to endure another sixty days of campaigning and political ads. Ouch.

Therefore, your election to office must represent a better alternative to the population than a new election with different candidates. Now, how important is your political platform?

Each member of the entire population *may* vote, and of those who vote, more than half must vote for you. You don't know who will and will not vote. And you really want that parking space! So, how can you help ensure your political platform satisfies over half the population of potential voters?

To answer this, we must understand why every voter matters, including you.

You Are Unique

John Boyd became known as “40-second Boyd” because, as a flight trainer at Nellis Air Force Base, he had a standing bet that he could go from being in the gun sights of an enemy aircraft to having that same aircraft in *his* sights in less than 40 seconds. It was a bet he never lost, in over 3000 hours of flight time.⁵² He was central to the development of an entire system for understanding how much energy each plane had and how it needed to and could maneuver,

⁵² Robert Coram, interview by Brian Lamb, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*, C-SPAN Archives, 2002, 2:21.

which he called “Energy-Maneuverability” theory⁵³. He used that to understand what he needed to do to win in a dogfight. His concepts and teachings on aerial combat are still taught today at US fighter training commands. His work contributed to the development of the US F-15, F-16 and F-18 fighter aircraft.⁵⁴

But he didn’t stop there. He thought more about how militaries fight, make decisions, and win or lose. He developed a framework for understanding how a military observes what is happening, applies meaning to those observations, makes decisions, and then takes action, the OODA-loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) model.⁵⁵

One thing that Boyd wondered about was why him? Why did he come up with all of these ideas; why hadn’t others. This led him to one of his, in my opinion, greatest intellectual works: the concept of “destruction and creation.”⁵⁶ His premise was that each person is a composite of everything they have ever seen, heard, or otherwise sensed, absorbed through their unique mental faculties and influenced by their one-of-a-kind DNA. Each person then deconstructs these experiences, ideas, and phenomena into “blocks,” smaller, more basic concepts, that they then reassemble in new, original ways. It is as if each of us has a unique set of life building blocks, obtained from our personal understanding of our past, from which we can construct something original.⁵⁷

⁵³ Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*, 5:31.

⁵⁴ Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*, 2:40.

⁵⁵ Frans P. B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (London: Routledge, 2006), 229.

⁵⁶ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 131.

⁵⁷ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 134.

Have you at times seen what others have missed? Did it appear obvious to you? Did you wonder why no one had thought of this before? At those times, you were drawing on your unique set of building blocks, your combination of experience, insight, and biology, which allowed you to make connections others couldn't.

In Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Righteous Mind*, Haidt proposes that our experiences in life, coupled with our biology (so, both nature and nurture), lead us to hold the beliefs we have.⁵⁸ Because we are social creatures, we then *use logic* to explain to others why our beliefs are correct, so the group accepts us: "Intuition comes first, strategic reasoning comes second."⁵⁹

From this framing, what you think and believe comes not from your earnest study of all aspects of an issue, your effective use of logic; it comes from your life's journey: everything you have experienced, every decision you have made, all filtered through your unique biology. You and everyone else are unique, because no two people experience the same journey in life or have the same biological makeup; we can never see the world through the same eyes. *You have come to the opinions you have because of your journey, not your application of argument.*

Since your viewpoint forms from an entire lifetime of experience, others cannot change it; only you can by adding to that experience with a new thought or understanding. It seems to make sense that the more experience you have, the less likely you are to shift your opinions. One premise Braver Angels teaches is not to have the goal of changing the minds of others, but rather to seek to understand the minds of others and offer them the opportunity to understand yours as

⁵⁸ Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 99.

⁵⁹ Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, 59.

well⁶⁰; to give each other the gift of new building blocks. In September 2019, political scientists James Fishkin and Larry Diamond brought together a group of 526 individuals identified as “representative of Americans who are registered to vote” for a weekend near Dallas, Texas, to talk about politics.⁶¹

“Participants wore nametags without any indication of partisanship, and in the conversations that resulted, it was often hard to tell which camp to place voters in.”⁶²

“Asked if these conversations had changed their minds at all, most people gave the same answer. ‘No.’”⁶³ However, “Many participants described their surprise at finding common ground with one another.”⁶⁴

In recounting this experiment, I want to dispel the idea that there are bad people and good people, heroes and villains. I believe we tend to think we are good and they are bad; however, my life’s journey has shown me that this is more a feature of the tales we tell than the reality we inhabit. I don’t believe there is a right or wrong version of a person, simply because there is

⁶⁰ Braver Angels, “Our Mission,” June 6, 2025, <https://braverangels.org/our-mission>, under “Our Vision,” 2nd para.

⁶¹ Emily Badger and Kevin Quealy, “These 526 Voters Represent All of America. And They Spent a Weekend Together,” New York Times, October 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/02/upshot/these-526-voters-represent-america.html>.

⁶² Badger, “These 526.”

⁶³ Badger, “These 526.”

⁶⁴ Badger, “These 526.”

nothing to use as a metric for rightness and wrongness. People are generally good, at least as seen from their own perspective. *I have never met anyone who plays the villain in their own story.*

You are who you are because of all you are and all that has happened to you. We need to have a society that works for you and listens to you, not the other way around.

In creating a working society, we need to start from the premise that nothing about what you want or believe needs to change. You don't need to change for our society; you are what constitutes our society. Additionally, you are extremely valuable to all of us because you possess a unique set of building blocks that can lead to untold benefits, advancements, new ways of thinking, acting, and understanding. Not only must our society avoid trying to change you, to become all we can be, it must actively *listen* to you.

You Are Important

I'm not going for a kumbaya moment here. I'm not saying we all need to be nicer to each other and appreciate each other more.

I'm saying you need to be you, and we need to listen to what you have to say.

I am also *not saying* we must *want to* listen to you more. Again, you do not need to change who you are, including your potential steadfast refusal to listen to other viewpoints. *But our society* must listen to you.

We can't let our political system intentionally *or unintentionally* silence any of our citizens. We want to take the field with our whole team, not with almost half of them benched because they happen to be in the "currently out" political party or aligned with out-of-fashion political policies. As Sam Reчек, the founder of First Amendment Forum, put it, "the search for

truth is best pursued on the basis of a vast variety of competing perspectives.”⁶⁵ Our success, if not our survival, depends on it.

Have you ever questioned a current social norm only to be set upon by others to ensure you conform with their views? Can you recall a time when your voice was silenced? What did it feel like to have your perspective, to have your life’s journey, dismissed as wrong or false?

Okay, so your viewpoint is critical, but what about theirs? Clearly, people who believe differently than you are all biased. They should listen to you; yes. But why should we have to listen to them?

I also believe that *no one* can demonstrate an unbiased perspective. A bias is something on a slant, like a tilted shelf that books will slide off. But now put that shelf out in space. How do you know if the shelf is on a slant if you have no “down,” no sense of “level,” to compare it to? Our bias is the same.

We all have an unbiased perspective compared to ourselves and a biased perspective compared to anyone else. Every perspective is biased as every perspective comes through a unique set of eyes, travels through a unique set of filters, and results in a unique set of conclusions. A reporter cannot present an unbiased perspective. A news commentator (or a neighbor) cannot offer an unbiased opinion. My opinion is biased. Your opinion is biased.

I’m sure this is not a popular idea among those who *know* that they are not biased, who are working to be unbiased, who know that *their own* media is fair and balanced, but recognize that others are filled with lies and manipulation. *But how can we ask anyone to be “unbiased” when our own bias determines what is and is not biased?*

⁶⁵ Katelin Annes, “Episode 13: How to Keep Speech Free (and Fun?) On Campus,” Braver Angels, August 28, 2024, <https://braverangels.org/a-braver-way-episode-13>, 11:57.

Here is my point for this chapter: **You, whoever you are, are not the problem; you are the solution.**

So, how do we ensure your voice is heard, even if no one wants to hear you?

And what does any of this have to do with getting you more votes in an election against None Of The Above? We are halfway to answering both questions.

Now that you have learned to see yourself as an individual, you must learn to see you in the plural sense, as a group. Let me show you how now.

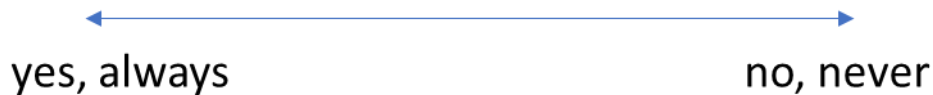
Chapter 3: Seeing Us

Seeing In Facets

Issues are about choices. Should we do it or should we not? A yes-no question. However, the issues we face in life tend not to be binary. “Do I go to the grocery store or not?” is a yes-no question, but that isn’t the whole issue. Which grocery store? When do I go? How do I get there? Who do I take with me? Do I take my own bags? What will I buy? Each of these questions is a *facet* of the main issue: “Do I go to the grocery store?”

Each facet is itself an issue. In exploring the facet of “which grocery store?”, there are facets of facets. Do I go to the cheapest, the cleanest, the closest, the best stocked, or the one with the shortest lines? And each of these facets also has facets.

When it comes to our policies on social or political issues, I find it helps to think of each facet as an issue that exists on its own, single, political continuum. On one end of that continuum, we have the equivalent of “yes, always,” and on the other is “no, never.”



{INSERT political continuum graphic}

Should women be allowed to abort their pregnancies? That is the choice, and it sounds like a yes-or-no question. “*Yes*, women should *always* be allowed to abort their pregnancy, under any circumstance.” And “*No*, women should *never* be allowed to abort their pregnancy, under any circumstance.” However, there are facets and nuances that eventually bring most of us to a place somewhere between these two extremes. There are abortion situations to which we would

answer no and others to which we would answer yes. What are the circumstances of the pregnancy? What are the circumstances of the mother? Who pays? Who establishes the law? Who must be informed?

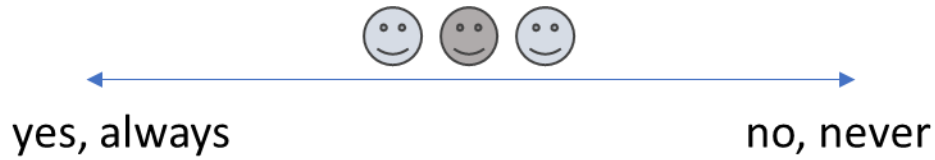
Given all the potential facets, you may not think that issues can be reduced to a single spectrum, but consider that each dimension can be viewed as a one-dimensional line stretching from one point to another.

Likewise, with almost any facet of an issue, I believe, we can visualize a line, a spectrum, between the two extremes of that facet, such as “all government-funded” to “all privately-funded,” with various ratios of the two forming the spectrum. Another example would be the transition from “decision held at the national level” to “decision held by the individual,” with a spectrum that spans state, county, city, and borough levels.



{INSERT political continuum graphic 2}

Your opinion on whether or not women should be legally allowed to have an abortion most likely lies somewhere along that spectrum between “yes, always” and “no, never” and is based on who you are, all you have experienced, and how you see the world. There are other people who believe there are a few more situations that merit allowing women to abort their pregnancy than you do. Likewise, there are others who believe there are less.



{INSERT political continuum spectrum 3}

That individual next to you would likely say that your opinions effectively *represent* their political beliefs on this issue, as you agree, say, 98% of the time, and that's good enough. Next to them, on their other side, further away from you down the political spectrum, is another individual. They agree with the person next to them 98% of the time, but they hold fewer opinions in common with you. That is likely close enough that they would still consider your opinions as representative of their own on this issue. Next to them, even further toward the No, Never end, is another individual, and next to them another, and then another. Individual after individual aligns on this spectrum, sitting further and further away from you.

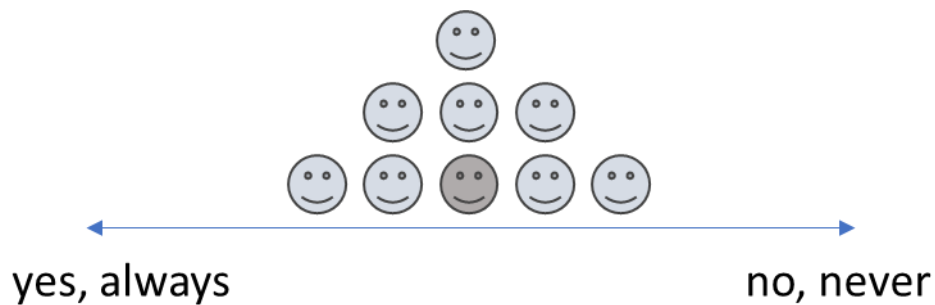


{INSERT political continuum spectrum 4}

Eventually, we reach an individual who would say that your opinions *do not* represent their values and beliefs. You disagree too much on this issue. That is the limit to which we can say your political position extends down the political spectrum. This support occurs, of course, both toward the Yes, Always side and the No, Never side.

And you should note that you may reach the end of the spectrum before you find an end to the support or the other way around.

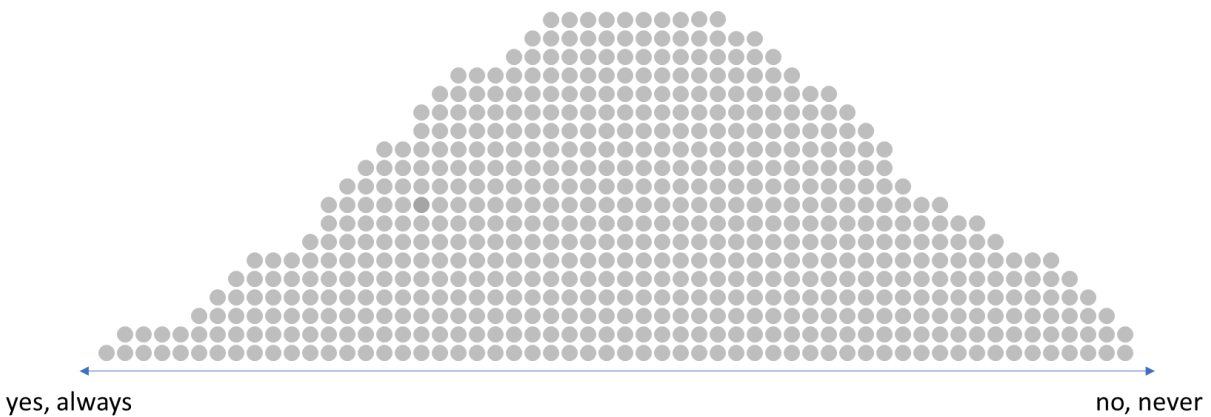
There are also, of course, those who share your sentiments almost exactly. To visualize these people as being in exactly the same place as you on the spectrum, imagine them stacked on top of you at that location on the political spectrum. And, of course, some people agree precisely with those people immediately to your left and right. The height of the stack of these people at any policy position then gives us an idea of how many people support that specific opinion. We start to build up a hill of sorts, a pile of opinions along the political spectrum line.



{INSERT political continuum spectrum 5}

We aren't identifying evil and non-evil people here; we're simply determining where each person's opinions, based on their life and experiences as seen through their biology, fall on the political spectrum in relation to everyone else's.

When we map the opinions of all the group members, we form a "public opinion curve." This tool, or lens, allows us to visualize any group of people based on their opinions on an issue at that time. Often these curves appear like hills with a single peak that tapers down toward each side, as we move closer to the extremes of "yes, always," and "no, never."



{INSERT public opinion curve}

Seeing in Public Opinion Curves

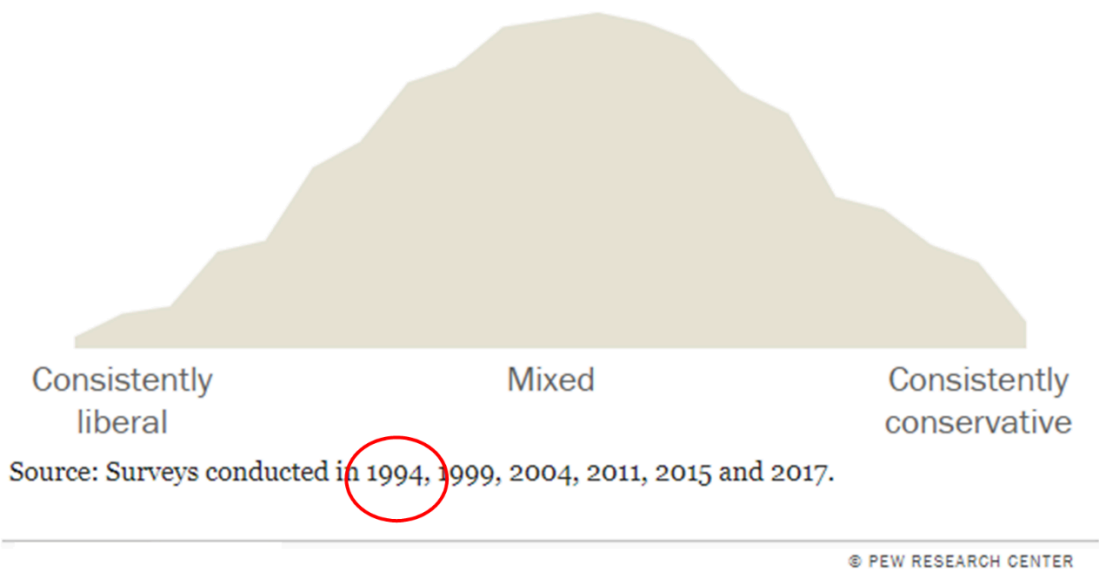
The Pew Research Center has made an interactive graphic, which I have taken individual still shots of, as shown below.⁶⁶ From these we notice that they generally, but not always, take a roughly hill-shaped form with a center of mass somewhere between the two extremes.⁶⁷ Here we see six such graphs from (and are presented by) Pew Research Center, from the years 1994, 1999, 2004, 2011, and 2017.

“[These graphs are] composed of 10 questions asked on Pew Research Center surveys going back to 1994 to gauge the degree to which people hold liberal or conservative attitudes across many political values (including attitudes about size

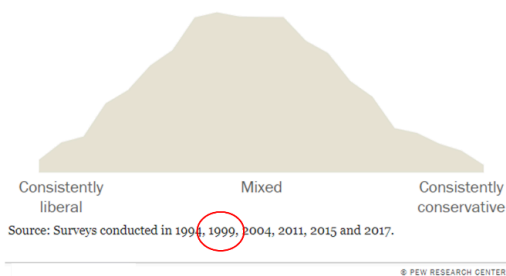
⁶⁶ Pew Research Center, “The Shift in the American Public’s Political Values,” October 20, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/feature/political-polarization-1994-2017/>, under “General Public” and “overall” (interactive graphs).

⁶⁷ Pew Research Center, “The Shift in the American Public’s Political Values.”

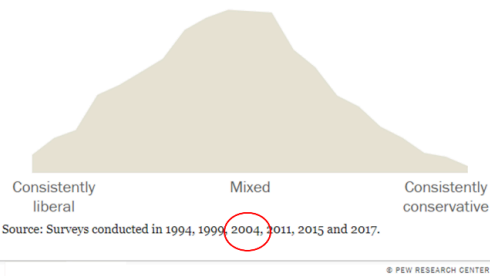
and scope of government, the social safety net, immigration, homosexuality, business, the environment, foreign policy and racial discrimination). The individual items are discussed at the beginning of [the cited source], and additional details about the scale can be found in the methodology. Where people fall on this scale does not always align with whether they think of themselves as liberal, moderate or conservative.”⁶⁸



{INSERT PEW Research Center 1}



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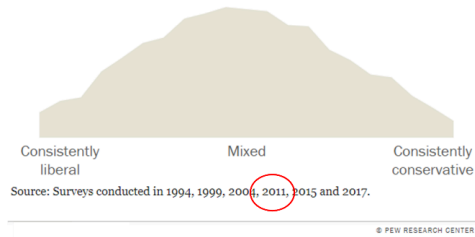
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al-landscape-release-updt..pdf, “What Is the Ideological Consistency Scale?”

{INSERT PEW Research Center 2}

{INSERT PEW Research Center 3}



{INSERT PEW Research Center 4}

{INSERT PEW Research Center 5}

There are several key points to understand about public opinion curves in general before proceeding.

First, *the opinions of the individuals that make up this curve would not have been agreed upon, discussed, or coordinated between the individuals.* None of these people may even know that the others exist or what those others believe in. No one is seeking to find a “centrist” position or common ground. No one is seeking consensus. No one is (potentially) listening to anyone else.

Second, *public opinion curves are specific to that group of people at that time on that issue.* Public opinion curves are not permanent; they shift over time depending on the views and desires of the individual members that make them up.

If a person shifts their opinion a little...

If we were to remove one person...

If we gathered and charted the opinions of the same people a month later...

The curve would change. Maybe only slightly, but it would change.

Third, where people inhabit a curve is specific to that curve. On some issues, a person's opinion may fall to the right side of the curve, in others to the left.

Fourth, *the center of mass can be almost anywhere on the political spectrum* and does not have to be a point exactly halfway between Yes, Always and No, Never. Consider the question, "Should people be allowed to burn witches?" At one point in our nation's history, the center of mass of public opinion may have been placed rather close to Yes, Always. Today, I would argue, it is much closer to No-Never. Neither of these two majority opinions are set at exactly the halfway point.

Fifth, the substance of the public opinion curve is not created; *it already exists*; it is a characteristic of a group. Drawing a public opinion curve is simply a way to represent what is already there. Like the average height of the group of people you are a part of at any moment, you may not be aware of it, but it's there. At any time, in any group of people, there is almost always a public opinion curve on every possible issue. Just like with a group having an average height, no election *needs* to be happening. No polling needs to happen. No one *needs* to acknowledge, discover it or be aware of it.

Right now, all the people who are currently reading this book constitute a group of people that you are a part of. This book-reading-now group has a public opinion curve unique to this group, at this time, on every issue, and as people leave or come into this group, that curve changes. But no one creates it; it is a characteristic of this book-reading-now group.

Finally, if we were to survey large groups of people on a given issue (to what extent should we ban guns? deport immigrants? allow abortions?), noting what we learned from the

Pew Research Center's graphs earlier, the public opinion curve for most issues is probably not divided, but tends to appear as a single mass. Yes, we are all naturally unique, but it appears that no, we, as a population, are not naturally divided into two distinct groups with members generally holding only extreme opinions on one side of the spectrum or the other.

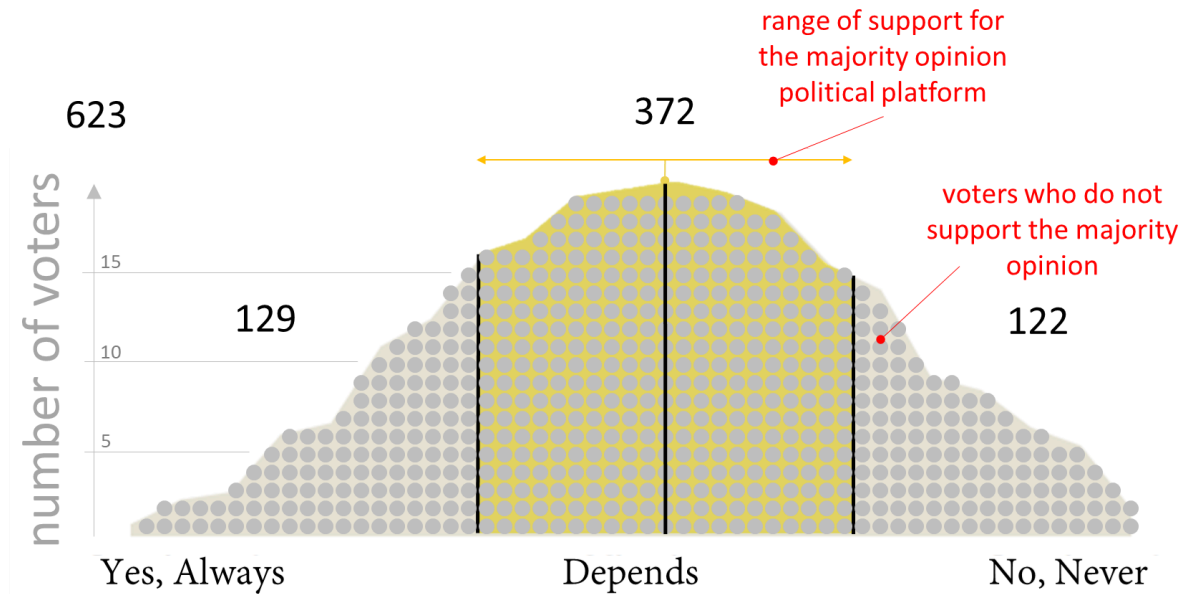
The only way we can discover the average height of our group is to measure the height of each individual. If someone were to take the time to listen to all the members of this group and understand *their* opinions on an issue, they would likely have a very good idea of what that group's majority opinion is on that issue.⁶⁹

And what can these curves tell us about the group?

This is the Pew Research 1994 curve again.⁷⁰ In the next illustration, I have overlaid the outline of the curve with 623 dots in 56 columns. These, we'll imagine, are 623 people who were placed on this spectrum line and whose opinions formed this curve. We can think of this group of individuals as a single entity, a body with its own desire.

⁶⁹ Pew Research Center, "National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)," July 23, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/fact-sheet/national-public-opinion-reference-survey-npors/>; Pew Research Center, *2025 NPORS Methodology Statement*, July 23, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2025/07/2025-NPORS-Methodology-Statement.pdf>; Pew Research Center, *2025 NPORS Online Questionnaire*, July 23, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2025/07/2025-NPORS-Online-Questionnaire.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Pew Research Center, "The Shift in the American Public's Political Values."



{INSERT public opinion curve 2}

Just as your opinion was found to be representative only of people within a specific political range, so, too, is any opinion limited on how far down the political spectrum people will consider it “representative” of themselves.

In the illustration, the center black line represents the policy most supported by this population on this issue. The highlighted yellow area represents the people who would accept this position as being representative of them. Thus the area supporting the public policy identified by the center black line extends to the black lines on each side, enclosing 372 supporters for this position. For those shown in gray, the majority opinion lies too far away for them to accept it. If we examine the opinion one space closer to Yes, Always or No, Never, we find fewer people will support it. I will call this policy, the majority opinion, and I will define the term “majority opinion” to be the policy most desired by a group of people.

The majority opinion will directly align with only a small fraction of the individuals in a group (in this example, 19 of the 623). Still, *the majority opinion is the most supportable policy*

on that issue for that group at that time, because the largest number of people are closer to it and believe it is representative of them as compared to any other policy platform. It represents the desires of the group as a group. Again, no one is deciding *what* the majority opinion is; it already exists. It exists even if it is never sought after, or measured.

As every member of the group's opinion affects the shape of the public opinion curve, to find the majority opinions, we must listen to every member⁷¹ of the group to understand them.

It is important to recognize that our individualism does not disappear when we see ourselves as a group. When we sing in a choir, our voices do not disappear; they become the music. When we see ourselves in a public opinion curve, our opinions do not disappear; they join together to form the public opinion curve and define the majority opinion.

Now, as citizens, we might be indifferent to other people's opinions or not necessarily want or need to listen to them, especially people we disagree with. But as a candidate ...

To find the majority opinion and understand what we as a group already want, we must listen to every member of the group.

⁷¹ In a practical sense, we can listen to a statistically significant random sampling of the group. It is key to the one trying to find the majority opinion (the candidate) not to ignore any part of the population because of their religion, gender, economic status, etc. To do so is to risk misunderstanding the desire of the population as a whole and failing to find the true majority opinion.

Chapter 4: How to Win

Beating None Of The Above

Well, that is a lot about curves and spectrum and opinions, but what the heck does that have to do with beating None Of The Above in your mayor race?

I introduce these curves, this lens for looking at the election, because it suggests a potential winning strategy.

You have a few strategies available to you.

Strategy One: Follow Your Heart

Maybe what *you* believe is right for the population. After all, it feels right to *you*. It represents *your* moral code based on *your* deeply held beliefs and values. But do more than half of the population agree? How sure are you that they agree, as you only get one shot at this?

Strategy Two: Follow the Money

People or organizations want to fund your campaign, so take their money and support their goals when you are in office (I scratch your back, you scratch mine). Campaigns require money—lots of money.⁷² And clearly, these individuals believe in the causes they are advocating for.

Of course, if the cause the sponsors want you to support is already desired by over half the population, why would they pay you to support it? And, if their cause contradicts what most people want, wouldn't your support of it *reduce* your chances of beating the None of the Above,

⁷² Theodore Schleifer and Kenneth P. Vogel, "In Election's Final Days, Dark Money and 'Gray Money' Fund Hidden Agendas," New York Times, October 30, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/30/us/politics/dark-money-presidential-campaign.html>.

increase your voters' desire for a new election with different candidates? And as such, does that not increase the chance of these *donors throwing away their money* by trying to get you to support something that decreases the chance of your election?

And does any of this change if your donor is a political party?

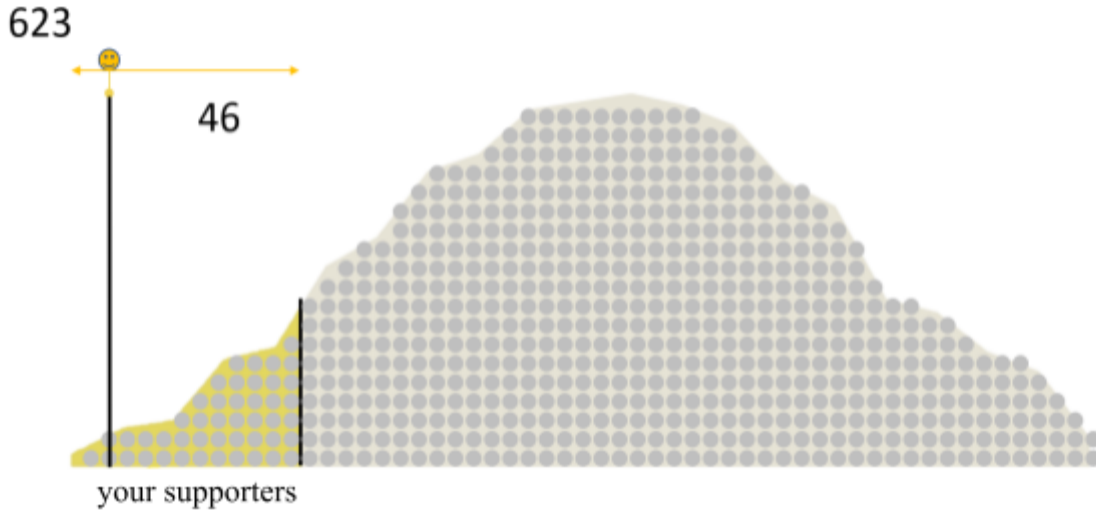
Strategy Three: Follow the Leader.

You can try influencing people to adopt your view, browbeating them until they give in. But when they do give in and agree with you, do they actually believe you, or are they just trying to get you to shut up so you'll leave them alone? When it comes time to vote, how certain are you that you "changed their minds?" If it was possible for you to change their minds, isn't it also possible for someone else to change their minds to something else after you had changed their minds?

Strategy Four: Follow the People.

When we look through the lens of the public-opinion curve, the winning strategy becomes obvious.

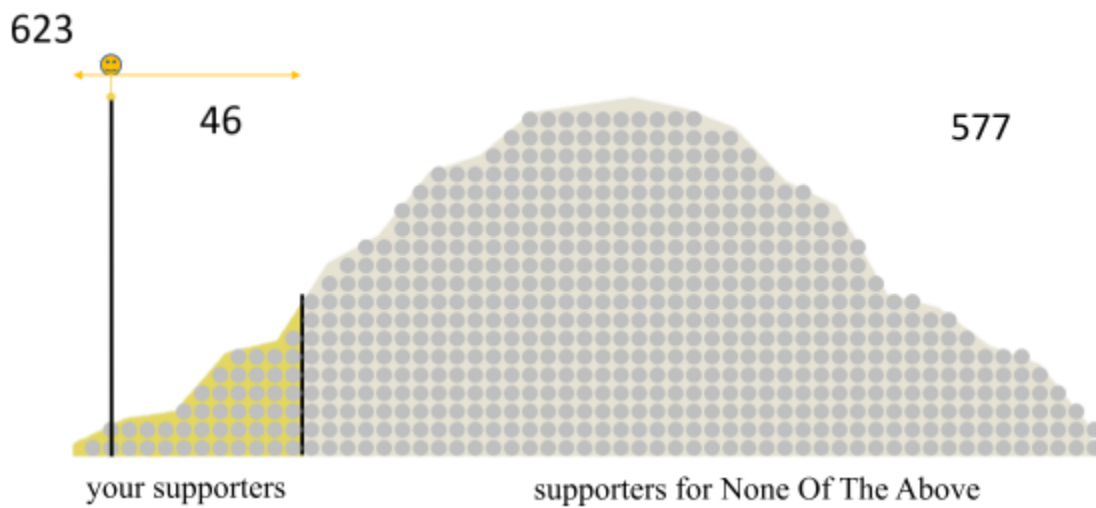
Before the “new election with different candidates” option, you could support any political policy and win. When we plot your political platform on the far extreme, you still gain



46 supporters. But who cares, you only need one-: yourself.

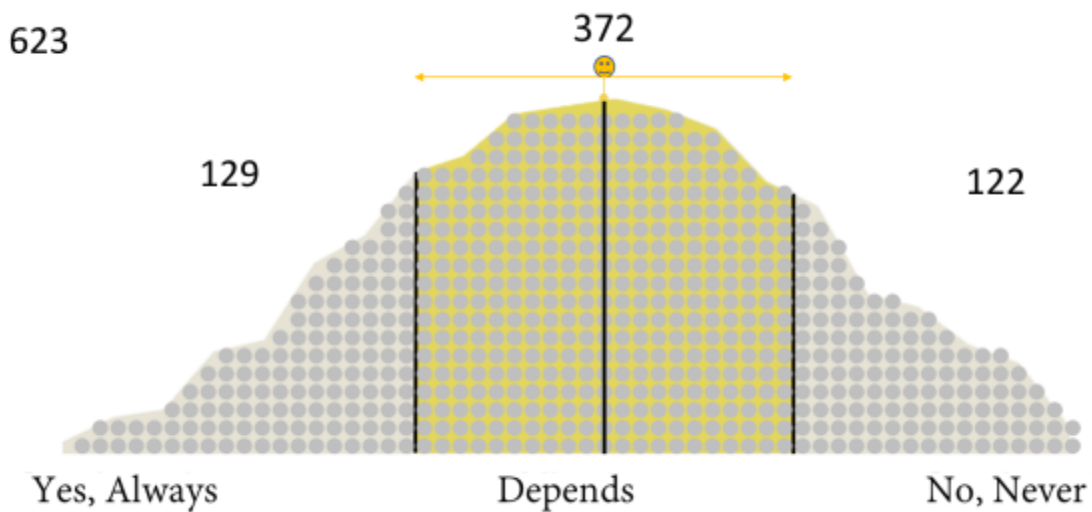
{INSERT public opinion curve 3}

But after we bring in the New Election With Different Candidates option, that’s 577 voters who don’t want you, and have the ability to ensure you are not elected.



{INSERT public opinion curve 4}

We know from our looking at public opinion curves that there is likely one political platform that you can choose that will have more voters than any other supporting it. As your goal is to win the election, it makes sense that you establish your political platform at that location, the majority opinion, to give you the best chance of victory. When we place your political platform at the center, you can garner 372 supporters. Those to your far political left and right only amount to 129 and 122 respectively, a total of 251 voters.



{INSERT public opinion curve 5}

It is, of course, possible to win from a platform other than the majority opinion, but the further you move away from it, the more difficult it will be and the more you increase your risk of loss.

As a candidate, your support of the majority opinion would likely not happen because you agree with it, or even that you want to be the best possible representative of your people. You want that parking spot! You want to win! And your best winning strategy against None Of The Above is listening to all of your voters, and finding and supporting their majority opinions.

Maybe you think there is a more moral policy you need to support. But if your role is to represent your voters, your moral obligation is to represent them accurately: you are not being elected to represent yourself and your morals. That falls under the first strategy of “do what you want.” And if your more moral policy does not align with the will of your voters, will you beat None Of the Above?

In this election, between you and None Of The Above, your best strategy, the one you ignore to your peril, is to listen to all of your voters and do your best to represent their majority opinions.

The literal job of a “representative” is to “represent” the people who elected them.⁷³ When a lawyer represents their client, they don’t tell the client whether they are guilty or innocent; the client tells them, and they listen to the client.⁷⁴

What are your chances of beating None Of The Above if you *listen* to the entire population--not just the loud people, nor the rich, nor the poor, nor the intellectuals, the laborers, the influential, the young, the old people, but *all* of the people? If you did this, do you think you could come up with what you believe to be the policies most desired by that population, issue by issue? Do you think you might be able to make a good guess at what their majority opinions are?

⁷³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “House of Representatives,”

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/House-of-Representatives-United-States-government>, para.

1; Sanat Pai Raikar, “Representative Democracy,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, November 13, 2025,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/representative-democracy>.

⁷⁴ The Editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Lawyer,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, November 20,

2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/lawyer>.

Is there a better winning strategy in this example than listening to all your voters and supporting their majority opinions? Is this not what we want our elected leaders to do, to base their platforms on what their voters want, not what they want (strategy one), what their parties and backers want, (strategy two), or trying to frighten or coerce voters to believe what they do not want to believe (strategy three)?

Beating the Second Candidate

But let's make a few changes to the election scenario and see what happens.

You are running for the position of Mayor. But what if you were, instead, running for the position of District 17 Representative.

Would your winning strategy change?

You are still up against None Of The Above. You still have to maximize your support. There is still a public opinion curve. There is still a platform of majority opinions. Does it matter what political office the election is for? How can your winning strategy change?

Does it matter that it's you who is running for office? What if *I, Tedman*, ran for the position of Mayor unopposed against None Of The Above, whose winning will cause me to lose in the election.

I'm up against None Of The Above. I still have to maximize support from the voters. There is still a public opinion curve. There is still a platform of majority opinions that I can only find by listening to all of the voters. Why would I have a different winning strategy than you? Does it, therefore, matter *who* is running for the political position? How can it?

So, it doesn't matter what the office is, and it doesn't matter who the candidate is. If a candidate runs unopposed in an election against None Of The Above, where None Of The Above

could win, the candidate's winning strategy must be to listen to all of their voters to find and support their voters' majority opinions.

Let's push this thought experiment a step further.

Imagine a ballot where we see your race for mayor against None Of The Above.

Mayor	
choose one	
You	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 2}

And right below that we see another race, for the same mayoral office, which shows my name in a race against None Of Tthe Above".

Mayor	
choose one	
Tedman	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 3}

Please note, I'm not recommending we do this. This is a thought experiment to help me show you something.

What if both you and I ran for the position of Mayor unopposed against None Of The Above, at the same time, but in different election races?

At this point the key question is this: would our (the candidates') winning strategy change based on the fact that these parallel elections now exist?

When we examined how changing the office you were running for changed your strategy, we concluded it did not, because you were still up against None Of The Above, and so you still

had to maximize your support. There was still a public opinion curve. There was still a platform of majority opinions. And none of that has changed in this case.

Also, although you would have won with a majority (over fifty percent) of votes in your race against None Of The Above, you weren't trying to get "a majority." You were trying to get *the most possible* votes, because any vote not cast for you would be cast for None Of The Above, and you can't risk intentionally reducing the total number of votes you can get by adopting other strategies such as supporting your own beliefs or supporting those of a financial backer, influencer, or political party.

Additionally, we can say that both you and I are trying to get the most votes possible, to ensure we beat None Of The Above. It's the same goal whether the *other* election race for mayor is there or not. So, is there anything different about our situation that would drive us to have a different winning strategy?

Beating More Candidates

Mayor	
choose one	
You	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 2}

Mayor	
choose one	
Tedman	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 3}

Now, what if we add a third candidate, Candidate C, in a third separate election race for mayor where they are up against None Of The Above's whose winning will ensure their losing?

Mayor	
choose one	
Candidate C	<input type="checkbox"/>
None Of The Above	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 4}

One ballot showing three separate races all for the same office. I know that is nuts, but the question we have before us is: does this change our winning strategies?

We know that it doesn't matter who the candidate is when it comes to the winning strategy. We know that what office they are running for doesn't change the winning strategy. We know that the fact that there is another identical election race happening at the same time doesn't change the winning strategy. We know there is still a public opinion curve. We know there is still a platform of majority opinions. Have we really changed anything?

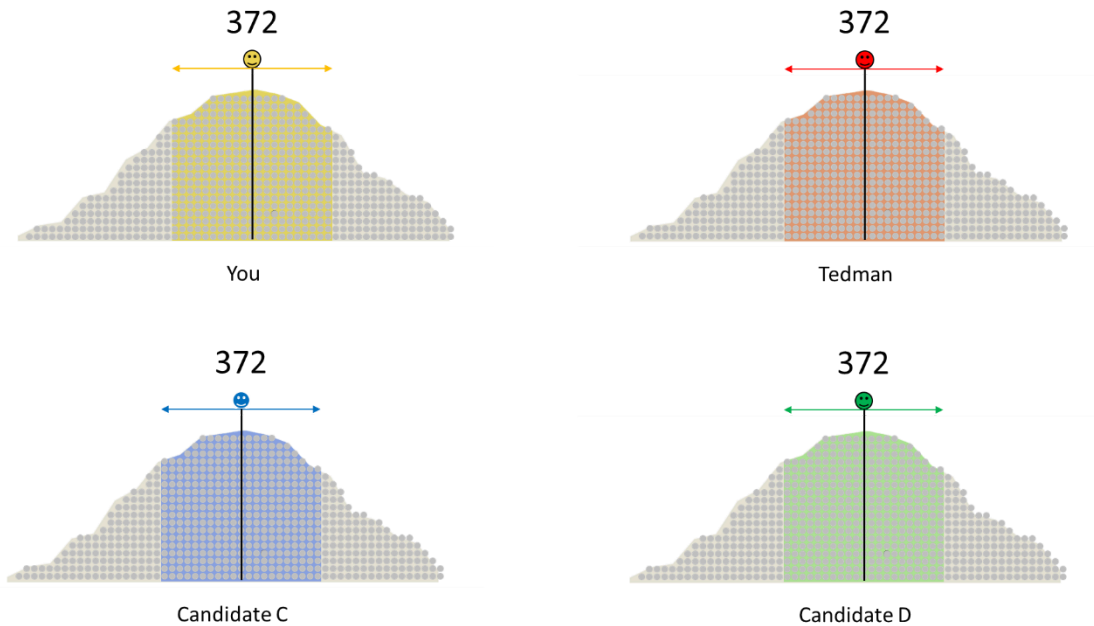
What if we add a fourth race for Mayor between Candidate D and None Of The Above? How can they have a different winning strategy than the rest of us?

Let's take a moment and see where we are. We have four candidates all running for Mayor who all have the same winning strategy, which is to listen to all of their voters in order to find and support the majority opinion of their voters. Why do we all have the same winning strategy?

We each need to beat None Of The Above. Or, to say it another way, we all must try to get the most votes possible from the entire voter population, and all voters are all free to vote for either us or None Of The Above.

Since voters choose None Of The Above only because they don't want us, None Of The Above can't stop us from getting any voter's vote; the votes we gain are based solely on our political platform, not None Of The Above's political platform.

If we were to look at these four elections through our newly found lens of the public opinion curve, with each of us following our optimum winning strategy, we can imagine seeing four separate but identical public opinion curves, with each of us taking the political platform that garners us 372 voters, ensuring each of us beats None Of The Above.



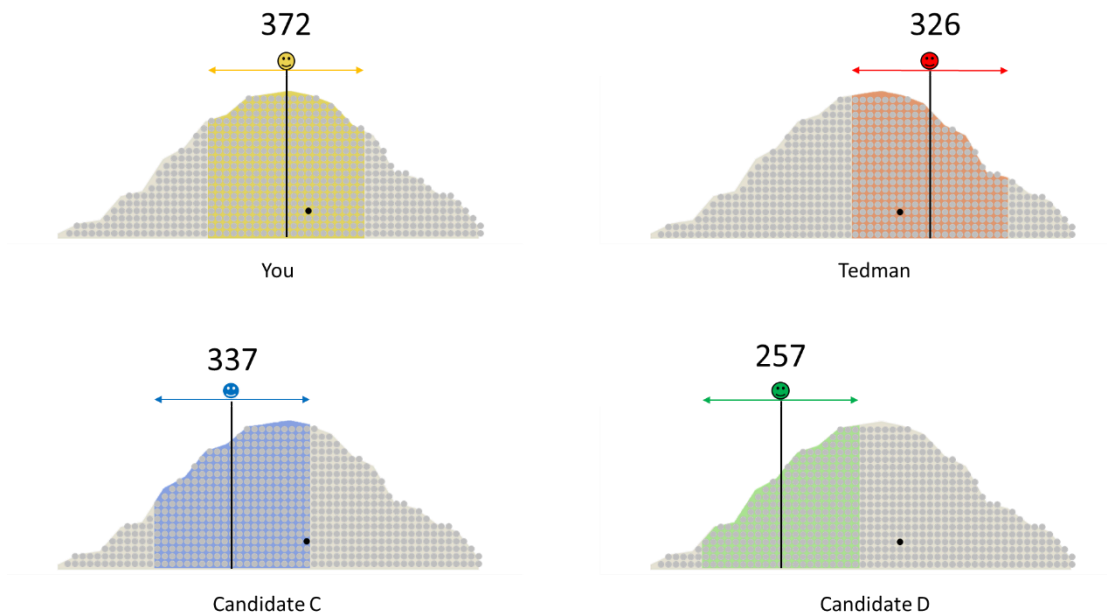
{INSERT elections public opinion curve}

The colored dots represent those who would support us in each election (372 out of 623). The gray dots represent those that would support None Of The Above (251 out of the 623). The same public opinion curve derives from this being the same group of voters. All four of us have the same goal. All four of us have the same winning strategy. All four of us are listening to the

same group of voters. Given that, what do you think the odds are that all four of us will support the same political platform?

What does it mean when one candidate is a Democrat, one a Republican, one a Libertarian, and one an Independent, if they all support the same political platform? *What relevance does political party have in such an election?*

Now we *aren't required* to all support the same political platform; that is a strategy, not a rule. And we might not even come to the same understanding of what the majority opinions of our voters are. We could end up looking like four separate but identical public opinion curves, with each of us establishing a platform in different places along the political spectrum. Yours may garner you 372 voters, but mine only 326. Another candidate: 337, and the fourth: 257.



{INSERT elections public opinion curve 2}

The candidate closest to the majority opinion, in this case you, would hold an advantage over those of us who got it wrong, or followed our heart, or the money or tried to impose our

own will on the population. In short, the winning strategy remains to listen to all the voters and to support the voters' majority opinions.

So here is the next question: Do we need to run four separate election races if we maintain the same imperative; the need to get the most votes possible from the entire population? This would mean allowing voters to choose any and all the candidates they wish; ***allowing all candidates to be independently evaluated by every voter***. In the examples above, I placed a single black dot representing the opinion of one voter. That voter could and would (all other things being equal) vote for you, for me, and for Candidate C, because we offer platforms that are close enough to her own opinion to support. But Candidate D does not.

This is starting to look like a regular election ballot such as what we see in any election except "choose one" has been replaced with "choose any and all you wish" meaning, it doesn't matter if a voter chooses you when it comes to their decision on whether or not to choose me, or Candidate C, or Candidate D or even a New Election With Different Candidates, NEWDC.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The use of the term "None Of The Above" from here on could become confusing, and, I think, the term "New Election With Different Candidates," or NEWDC would be less so. A voter could choose you and also choose NEWDC to show they would prefer you, but after that, they would prefer a new election with different candidates (NEWDC). It could also show that the voter would prefer a NEWDC, but would also accept you. Later we will introduce the idea of scoring candidates where a voter could make this clear. Logically, however, if this were true, the term "None Of The Above" wouldn't mean "None Of The Above" as the voter did want you as well. What None Of The Above really represents is a preference for a new election with different candidates, so NEWDC is the term I will use from here on.

Mayor	
Choose any and all you wish	
You	<input type="checkbox"/>
Me	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate C	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate D	<input type="checkbox"/>
NEWDC	<input type="checkbox"/>

{INSERT ballot box 6}

We have fundamentally not changed any of the conditions we had before when the elections were separate. Likewise, we haven't changed the winning strategy of the candidates. The winning strategy of every candidate remains to listen to all their voters and support their voters' majority opinions.

But this doesn't seem to be a candidate's winning strategy today. Candidates today appear to support and focus on their side of the political spectrum.⁷⁶ The winners seem to gravitate to

⁷⁶Elaine Kamarck, "What We Know about the 2024 Democratic and Republican Parties: An Analysis of Congressional Candidates," *Brookings*, December 27, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-we-know-about-the-2024-democratic-and-republican-parties-an-analysis-of-congressional-candidates/>.

either a political left or a political right..^{77 78} What is causing this to be the winning strategy? Are our candidates simply making “bad choices?” Is this the fault of bad actors or political parties?

In games, rules guide players. I remember creating a game in which the player was both a killer and had to investigate other killers trying to deduce which character was each type of killer. In an early version of the game, players quickly realized that their best strategy was to sit in one place and just kill everyone they could--no investigation, no deducing. That was not the game I wanted; it was not how I wanted the players to act. Did players act that way because they were jerks or trying to accomplish some hidden agenda?

No, I had designed a bad game.

When players do not act in the manner the designer wants, we call it, “breaking the game.” When this happens to my games, I cannot fault the players; rather, I have failed as the designer.

When our candidates support disparate policy positions that do not represent the majority opinions of their voters, and try to win the election by attacking the other side of the spectrum, we blame the candidates, the players. But could the problem, instead, be that we have bad rules that force the candidates to take the paths we wish them to avoid; paths they may even wish to avoid themselves? Have we set our politicians up for failure without even realizing it?

⁷⁷ Fuld, Joe. “Non-Partisan Elections: Ideology Matters.” *The Campaign Workshop*, March 10, 2025.

<https://www.thecampaignworkshop.com/blog/political-campaigns/non-partisan-elections>.

⁷⁸ Michael Greibrok, “Knowledge Is Power: Party Affiliation Gives Voters the Signal They Need in School Board Elections,” *The Foundation for Government Accountability*, February 16, 2024, <https://thefga.org/research/party-affiliation-gives-voters-signal-school-board-elections/>.

Before going on with this examination, look back at that last ballot in our thought experiment. Another good hypothetical question quickly arises, “What if one quarter of the people selected only you, one quarter me, one quarter Candidate C, and one quarter Candidate D?” In that case, no candidate would represent “a majority” of the voters. Isn’t such an outcome a huge problem?

That question, as you will see next, is the key to unraveling why we are currently politically divided into a two-party system, why our population is *evenly* divided between the two major parties, why no major third party can arise, and why this has been the case for almost the entire existence of the United States of America.

Chapter 5: When We Can't See

On June 22, 1969, the Cuyahoga River that runs through Northeast Ohio caught fire... again.⁷⁹ How does a river catch fire? Factories dump chemical waste and petroleum into the river. Why would companies do that? Because they have to.

Imagine you're a factory owner, and you don't want to pollute the river that flows along your site. Unlike your competitors, you pay to have your waste taken away and disposed of. You must push that additional cost to your customers to stay profitable. Your competitors do not incur such an additional cost and can offer their equally good products at a lower price. People, rationally, buy your competitor's products over yours, and you go out of business for the most laudable of reasons. And in your space, another company rises, which will either dump its waste into the river or go out of business just like you.

It goes further; if a company sees the creation and delivery of its product as a "moral" one (that is, the product creates value in the community and world), then the "morally correct" answer is to pollute the river.

Companies pour their waste into the river because the system that allows them to remain companies, demands it. Politicians are similar. They prioritize the needs of their party and supporters over those of their entire community, because the system, the rules of the game that enable them to become (and remain) representatives demands it.

⁷⁹ National Park Service, "The 1969 Cuyahoga River Fire," accessed October 13, 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/story-of-the-fire.htm>.

The rules of today's election game require candidates to try to build a ruling majority. This chapter examines why that is the worst possible winning strategy to force upon our candidates, even worse than forcing companies to pollute a river.

Which Majority Gets to Rule?

One major manifestation of playing by today's rules is the creation of a ruling majority.

Depending on how finely we divide a population and its size, we can potentially create a vast number of "majorities." Just as in the illustration below, I have taken the 623-person public opinion curve and shown how it can be easily subdivided so that one group consists of 312 voters.

{INSERT vast number of majorities}

This brings up the biggest problem inherent in the principle of "majority rule": which of those many, many majorities gets to rule? Is it the strongest majority, the cleverest majority, the wealthiest majority, the loudest majority, the most violent majority, the most manipulative majority? Ultimately, there is only one way to know: let them fight it out.

I believe that people who think we must seek to ensure majority rule believe that "a majority" represents the best we can do in determining what the group desires. But the lens of the public opinion curve that we looked through in the last chapter clearly shows how wrong that is. The *majority opinion* represents the best we can do, what the population already wants. A majority simply represents who won the war.

We create majorities by fighting; we discover majority opinions by listening.

If someone believes we should be ruled by a majority, that majority has to be defined and often manufactured through conflict. But if the goal is to understand the true majority opinion of

a population, then we must listen to that population. The majority opinion already exists as a natural characteristic of a group; it doesn't need to be created or fought for.

Talk of a “ruling majority” is deeply harmful. It means we've designed a system that depends on conflict and guarantees pain.

Majority Opinion vs. Ruling Majority

You may ask, “Doesn't having candidates support majority opinions also divide a population into a ruling majority and a ruled minority? Isn't this just semantics?”

No, it isn't semantics. *The majority opinion* and *a ruling majority* are very different.

The Majority Opinion

For any issue, yes, there will be people who do not support the majority opinion (the gray dots in the graphs back in Chapter 4), but, by definition, no other opinion is more supported by that group and thus it is the most representative of what that group wants.

As we've seen, no one created that majority opinion; it already existed within that group. It is organic to that group on that issue at that time, as a characteristic of that group. No one imposed it upon them. It is also not tied to a slate of other opinions created by a party or a person. The majority opinion is not a result of polling and, arguably, may not be describable with certainty by polling. The only people responsible for it are the people who make up that group.

People's positions in relation to the majority opinion will change issue by issue. If they do not find themselves supporting the majority opinion, this does not mean their voices will not be heard. They *must* be listened to in order to understand where the majority opinion exists. And as peoples' opinions change, so too does the majority opinion. To always know where the majority opinion is, one would always need to be listening to all the members of the group.

A Ruling Majority

In contrast, if we have *a ruling majority* and you are not part of it, your opinion no longer matters. That doesn't mean you are strongly against the stance of the majority, but whether you are or not doesn't matter.

In fighting for and creating "a majority," we didn't just create a ruling majority, *we created a ruled minority*. The representatives of "a majority" have one job: to represent the desires of *that* majority. That isn't because they are mean or short-sighted or evil, but, as they *created* that majority that brought them to power, they have to *maintain* that majority. A ruling majority is built. It is artificial.

It is arguably immoral for representatives to move away from the ideals of the supporters who elected them. If they did, how would that not violate the trust between them and their supporters? The representative's incentive is to uphold that social contract. In fact, I would argue that the representative *has a moral obligation to ignore the minority*.

The Morality of a Ruling Majority

Remember the burning river? The factory owner and the elected official face the same structural dilemma: refuse to play the game as it is designed, and someone else will take your place and play it.

That same social contract exists for a candidate who won by basing their political platform on the majority opinion, but they derived their platform by listening to everyone. So, their moral obligation is to continue to listen to everyone and shift their platform as the majority opinion shifts. *Representatives who won office by supporting the majority opinion are morally bound to represent all their voters as a group, not just a faction (or fraction) of their voters.*

What we see when a new party comes to power is they tear down what the previous party built, regardless of who took over from whom.⁸⁰ So, faced with the chance that all a representative's hard work to set the community on the correct path could be ended should the other side come to power, isn't the incumbent representative *morally obligated* to take whatever steps they legally can to ensure they and their party continue to do the good work they were elected to do? Isn't that what "gerrymandering" is? Ensuring your political party, the correct political party, the "good political party," maintains control? Is that not what those who voted them into office demand of them? What if you were the representative? Wouldn't you feel *morally obligated to gerrymander*?

Suppose you run a business, and you know one political party is working to institute policies that could cause your company to become unable to provide its valuable solution to the public. Would you not feel morally obligated to try to ensure the survival of your company and the benefit it delivers to the public (and your workers, suppliers, and stock holders) by supporting the campaigns of the rival candidates of this threat?

We may perceive the world as divided into good and evil, but we are the good and they are the evil. Gerrymandering to steal power from the true will of the people and allow those unsupported manipulators to stay in power is evil. Gerrymandering to ensure that the nation and our community are not gutted and destroyed by allowing that other party to come to power is good. But it really only matters what side of the fence you are on at the moment.

⁸⁰ Cheryl Mavodza, Rachel Goldman, and Brittany Cooper, "The Impacts of the Global Gag Rule on Global Health: A Scoping Review," *Global Health Research and Policy* 4 (2019): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41256-019-0113-3>.

When a candidate wins with a 40% victory, they likely think they are vulnerable to losing the next election. They don't have the political power to gerrymander or the political power to ignore the other 60% of the voters. They must find partners, seek out compromise, and build a coalition. In parliamentary governments, parties must build ruling coalitions if they lack an absolute majority (more than 50%). But if they hold an absolute majority, they are best served by ignoring the minority, focusing on supporting their majority (their base), and keeping themselves in power (gerrymandering, adjusting voting laws to more favorable ones, taking influence money and questionable contributions, etc.)

Far from "majority rule" being a foundation of democracy, it is one of the key indicators that a community is suffering through a democratic dark age. I believe a society that seeks majority rule is a society that has built a system destined to be in conflict with itself. Our democratic dark age is defined by this requirement, that we are constantly set against one another, even when we don't want to be, even when we recognize where it leads.

A ruling majority forms the basis of this warped morality, where we denigrate the actions taken by the other side as we are compelled to take those same actions ourselves. It compels us to fight ourselves, all the way to civil war.

The Parable of the Five Diners

The *concept* of "a majority" is logical. From an economic perspective, we aim to create the greatest amount of satisfaction within the group as possible. But do we create the greatest amount of satisfaction when we create a majority? Consider this parable.

There were once five friends, Avery, Blake, Casey, Dakota, and Emerson, who wanted to decide where to have a meal together. They could choose between restaurants that exclusively

served either fish, pasta, chicken, or pizza. The group took the obvious path when deciding which to choose. They could only go to one restaurant, so they allowed each person to choose their favorite.

When we tabularize their choices, we have this:

Diners	Fish	Pasta	Chicken	Pizza
Avery	X			
Blake	X			
Casey		X		
Dakota		X		
Emerson		X		
total votes	2	3	0	0

Pasta won a clear majority, three votes to two.

A majority voted to eat pasta. However, a majority also hated the fact that they were going to eat pasta. How can this be possible?

Emerson loved chicken and wanted to vote for that. However, she also knew that both Avery and Blake loved eating fish and would likely vote for fish. Similarly, she knew Casey and Dakota both loved eating pasta and would likely vote for pasta.

Emerson had a choice. She could either vote for chicken, resulting in a coin flip between pasta and fish, or she could choose “the lesser of two evils.” As she hated pasta slightly less than fish, she could, at best, avoid her least favorite option. Thus, 60% of the diners (3 out of 5) voted for pasta, and 60% of the diners (3 out of 5) hated the idea of going out to eat pasta.

But what if we could find a way to allow Emerson to vote for what she truly wanted? What if we add runoff votes? What if we set a threshold that one choice had to obtain at least 50% of the votes to be the election winner? Everyone could then vote as they wanted, and if no option received greater than 50% of all the votes cast, we could remove the option receiving the

fewest votes, and everyone could recast their votes. This way, people could always vote for their “honest” favorite in each round and not have to choose “the lesser of two evils.”

If we did that, we would have this after the first round:

Diners	Fish	Pasta	Chicken	Pizza
Avery	X			
Blake	X			
Casey		X		
Dakota		X		
Emerson			X	
total votes	2	2	1	0

Since no option had more than half the votes, the option with the fewest, pizza, is eliminated, and everyone votes again. This obviously didn’t change anything, as no one had voted for pizza in the first place.

Diners	Fish	Pasta	Chicken
Avery	X		
Blake	X		
Casey		X	
Dakota		X	
Emerson			X
total votes	2	2	1

Since no option had more than half the votes, the option with the fewest votes, chicken, is eliminated, and Emerson is back to her choice of two evils; she again chooses pasta.

Diners	Fish	Pasta
Avery	X	
Blake	X	
Casey		X
Dakota		X
Emerson		X
total votes	2	3

So, *adding a 50% threshold and runoffs did nothing to change the election outcome.* But why would we ever think it should? Do you think that Emerson's pasta tasted better because she, at some point, got to express her desire for chicken? When you are told to eat shit, does it taste better if you can first say, "no" before being forced to eat shit, anyway?

The point of this story is that inferring that just because something is "a majority," it must, therefore, be *the majority opinion* is not accurate. From a practical stance, if a majority is satisfied with the direction the group is heading, they should outnumber the potential number of individuals who would rebel against this direction. Said another way, the ruling majority should outnumber the ruled minority. But as we saw in the parable, even this may not be true if our goal is simply to create a majority.

The idea that "a majority" defines what the people want is myth, not math.

Truly Understanding Us

You might still be thinking, "but 'a majority' must be as good as it gets; you can't please everyone. After all, Emerson did get her second choice."

But even that isn't true. Emerson's second choice was pizza, which was eliminated before her first choice, so she had to choose between the lesser of two evils, even though it first appeared, and she believed that she wouldn't have to. And it wasn't that "some people" were upset with the outcome in the Five Diners; it was that "a majority" were upset with the outcome. And wasn't the goal of doing the election in the first place to find an outcome desired by a majority of the population?

The problem is that we aren't using the majority opinion of the people, which already exists and *does* represent what the group wants and is the most supportable policy. Instead, we are choosing to fight against ourselves to decide which majority gets to rule. As our ultimate goal

is to win this contest repeatedly, we are literally planning to fight ourselves over and over and over.

So, let's continue our parable of the Five Diners and see if finding a majority is "as good as it gets." Maybe, there was no better answer for this group than pasta. Maybe Emerson loved pasta, but how would we know that?

What if we listened to each diner and what they thought about each option? We do this when we allow each diner to evaluate every option independent of the other options. That is, it does not matter how a diner evaluates fish when it comes to how they will evaluate pasta.

"Evaluations" can take many forms. The diners could give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down to each option. They could assign each a score from zero to two, or zero to five, etc. For this parable, we will say the diners decided everyone could score each choice on a range from zero to nine, where zero is what they greatly disliked and nine is what they greatly liked. If we did that, we would discover this:

diners	Fish	Pasta	Chicken	Pizza
Avery	9	0	2	8
Blake	9	0	6	6
Casey	0	9	4	8
Dakota	0	9	5	8
Emerson	0	2	9	7
total score	18	21	26	37

The winner here is pizza, with a score of thirty-seven points (an average voter score of 7.4). If everyone had specified only their top choice, we would have again had two votes for fish, two votes for pasta, one vote for chicken, and no votes for pizza. Even though no one rated pizza as their top choice, it has the broadest appeal and is *the most desired option of the group as a group, the majority opinion*. And our goal, of course, is to find the best option *for the group* by listening to every voter.

The fact that pizza was the winner did not have to be the case. It could have been that none of this group liked pizza, but a voting method that kept us from listening to what everyone had to say would hide this fact from us, just as it hid the fact, this time, that pizza is the best choice for this group.

Here is the “so what.” If you were going to be magically transported into the body of either Avery, Blake, Casey, Dakota, or Emerson, but you didn’t know which it would be, would you have wanted the group of diners to have used a choose-one voting method (even with runoffs and a 50% threshold) or would you have rather have had all the diners be permitted to evaluate each option independent of the others?

When we come together, we become more than individuals; we become a community. That community can be sliced up into an almost infinite number of majorities, but it usually has only one majority opinion on any given issue at any given time, which represents the best choice for that community. And that majority opinion exists now, ready to be discovered by anyone willing to listen to the individuals who make up the group.

To sum up our above discussion:

- | Majorities | Majority opinions |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ● Created | ● Revealed |
| ● Virtually limitless | ● Usually only one |
| ● Decided by fighting each other | ● Discovered by listening to the opinion of every single potential voter. |
| ● Supported by 50+% of the population | ● The most supported position for a population |

Majorities show us who to fight, majority opinions show us who we are.

What does our current drive to create a ruling majority have to do with creating a society that is evenly and unnaturally divided in half? Actually, everything, as we will see next.

Chapter 6: The Roots of the Problem

The 2006 election in Brush, in Colorado 4th Congressional District, highlights how politicians must play to win. Marilyn Musgrave, the Republican candidate and office incumbent had won her previous election with 51%. Angie Paccione, new to politics, stood as the Democrat candidate. Though the district had begun to show signs of moving from traditional values, that was what Marilyn kept as her platform. Angie reflected more liberal views like gay marriage and woman's rights and based her platform on these.

Then a third candidate joined the race. Reformist Party candidate, Eric Eidsness, had served as an environmental advisor to the Reagan administration and was a Vietnam vet. He entered the race for the general election after losing in the Republican primary. His political platform sat between Marilyn's and Angie's, but his background and politics attracted more voters from the political right than the political left. By October, polls showed Marilyn Musgrave losing to Angie Paccione.

The Republican and Democratic national committees became engaged and spent over eleven million dollars combined on attack ads. Suddenly ranchers and sugar beet farmers started arguing over immigration reform, the War in Iraq, internet privacy laws, and global warming. Issues that had little to impact on their lives and of which they had little to no knowledge became flashpoints of anger and rage. What mattered to the community of Brush no longer mattered to the election.

Marilyn won that election with 46.61% of the vote and went on to serve her third term in Congress and was defeated in the following election. The 4th Congressional district continued to be an election battleground. The Democrats took the district two years later, but then it flipped

back to Republican in 2010. Republicans gerrymandered the district in 2011, and the district has remained a safe Republican seat to this day.

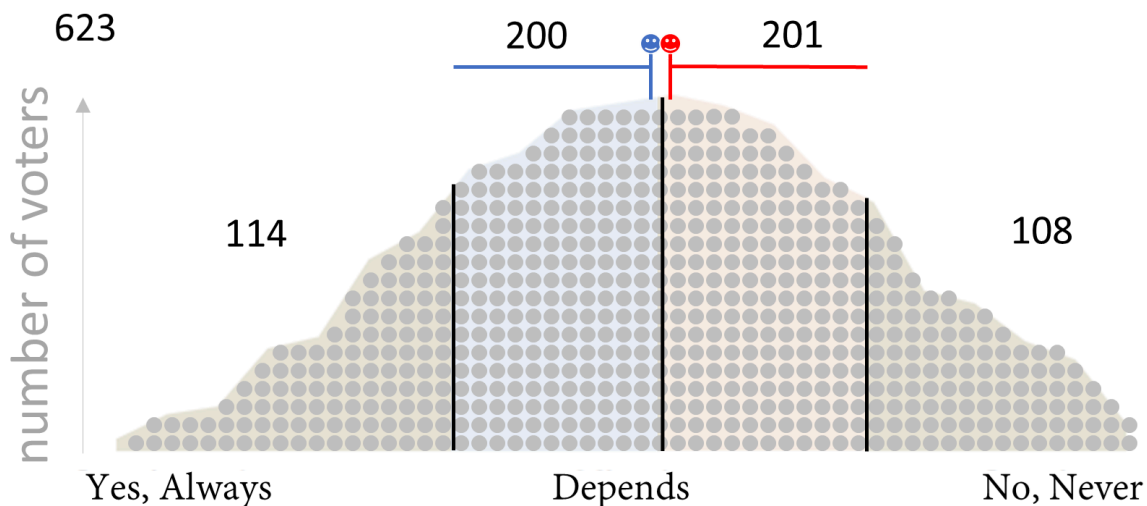
What happens when we look at such elections through the lens of the public opinion curve? How do candidates play the election game today? What is their winning strategy based on today's rules?

Two Candidates

As we examine these questions, I want to cancel out all other factors such as gender, race, etc., by assuming all candidates and voters are identical (the same person with the same history and experience) and they only differ in the political platform they support. I will also assume that every voter is familiar with each candidate's platform.

I know these are not realistic assumptions. I know that many factors affect an election, and what I'm examining could be thought of as an impossibly ideal state. But that is my point; what we are about to uncover would appear to happen *even in an idealized state*, without the influence of evildoers, malice, deception, or any other adversity.

Each voter is allowed to choose one candidate.



{INSERT number of voters}

To see this through the lens of the public opinion curve, let's return to our hill, made up of the opinions of 623 voters.

Assume that both candidates, we'll say you and I, begin by listening to all our voters with both of us seeking to represent the majority opinions of those voters.

As you and I both listen to the same group of people to discover the same thing, how likely is it that we will both come to the same conclusion and support the same political platform? Even then, one of us will be a smidge closer to "Yes, Always" and the other a smidge closer to "No, Never."

With both you and I at the center, we have the ability to reach about 200 each (well, I get to reach 201). This leaves 114 voters too far from our platforms to want to support us on your side and 108 too far from our platforms on my side. This is based on the idea that voters, all other things being equal, will vote for the candidate whose political platform most closely represents their own beliefs. Not always, of course, but a voter will normally not forgo a candidate they feel best represents them for one they feel represents them less.

We'll make it a constraint that every voter votes *honestly* for the candidate who best represents themselves. Therefore, no voter to the left of the blue candidate (in this illustration) will vote for the red candidate, and vice versa. Our two candidates, both of whom represent the majority opinion of the voters, have now divided the population of willing voters between them, almost exactly in half.

[The Psychology of Winning](#)

Given all this, how can you increase your chances of winning? You have an opportunity given two well-documented aspects of human psychology.

Daniel Kahneman conducted an experiment where participants had to identify how much they would pay for a Cornell University coffee mug.⁸¹ Experimenters next gave mugs to a second group of participants and asked them how much they would sell them for. A third group had to choose between an offer of money or the mug. The results showed that people who had been given the mugs and could sell them valued the mugs much more than those who were asked to identify how much they would pay. This is the *Endowment Effect*. It shows that we tend to value something more once it is ours.

Likewise, research into consumer behavior⁸² has shown that once an individual decides on a specific brand of product, they tend to keep getting the same brand unless a strong reason to change emerges (how often do you change your brand of toothpaste or peanut butter?) Changing to another option after choosing one takes time and energy; this is known as *switching costs*. Research shows that customers have multiple reasons not to switch providers that go beyond simple satisfaction with their current supplier.

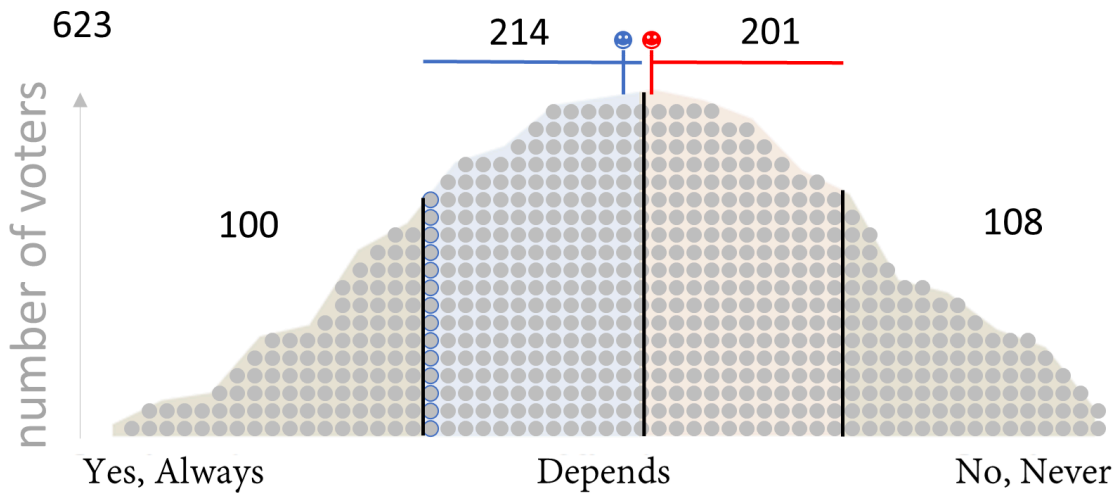
Because of the Endowment Effect *and* switching costs, you, as a candidate, have the ability to increase the number of voters you have.

Moving your political platform a little toward the fringe by adding a few more “yes, always” situations to the policies you support in your platform, you can likely gain additional

⁸¹ Daniel Kahneman, Jack L. Knetsch, and Richard H. Thaler, “Experimental Tests of the Endowment Effect and the Coase Theorem,” *Journal of Political Economy* 98, no. 6 (1990): 1325–48.

⁸² Thomas A. Burnham, Judy K. Frels, and Vijay Mahajan, “Consumer Switching Costs: A Typology, Antecedents, and Consequences,” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 31, no. 2 (2003): 109–26.

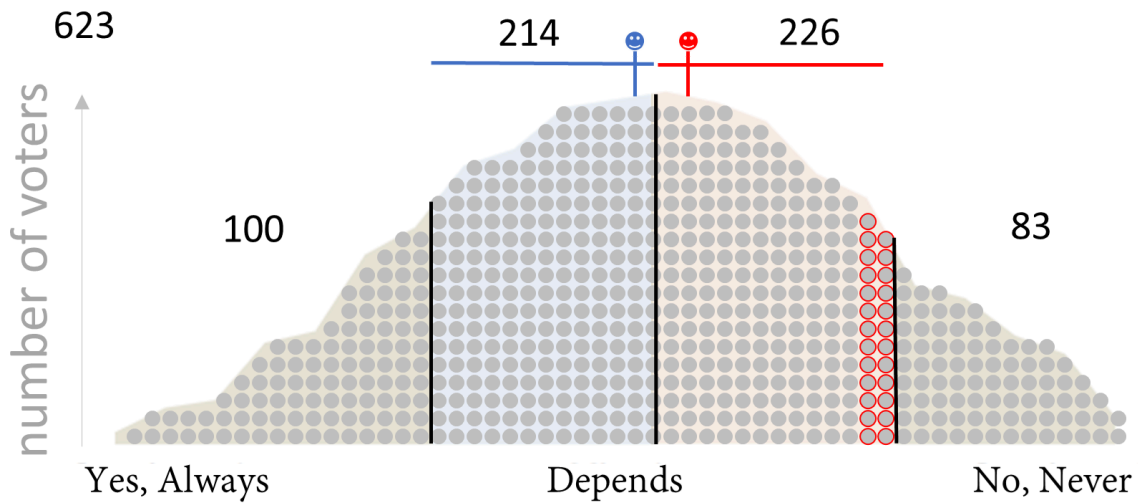
voters from the left fringe. And, due to both the Endowment Effect and switching costs, you would not likely lose voters from the center. The voters on the fringe, who had no good option, now see you as a good enough option. To the voters in the center, you were a slightly better choice than the opponent, and now they see no real value difference between their options. Because you haven't given them a reason to change their vote to the other candidate, they don't.



{INSERT number of voters 2}

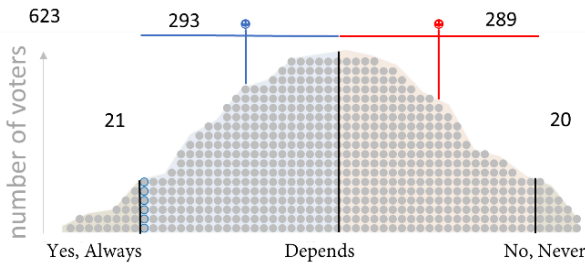
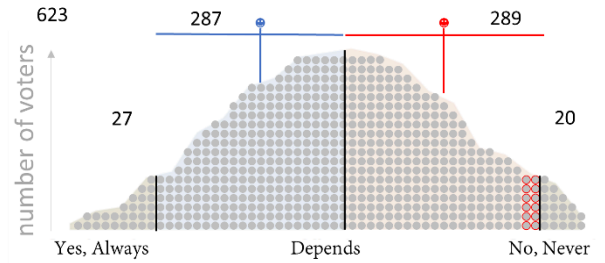
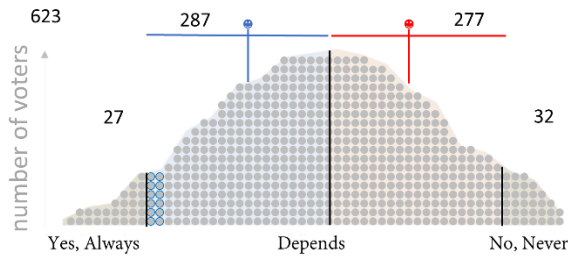
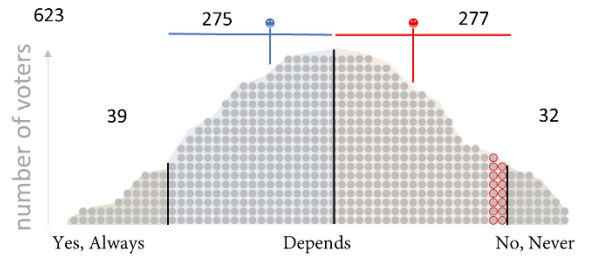
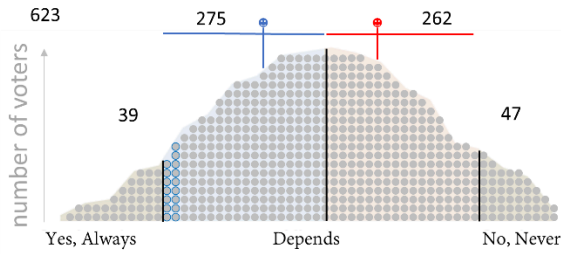
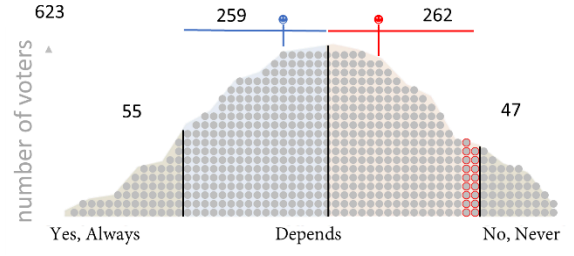
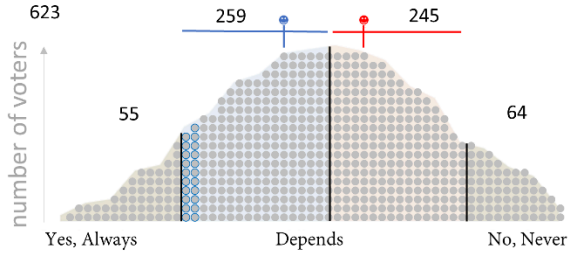
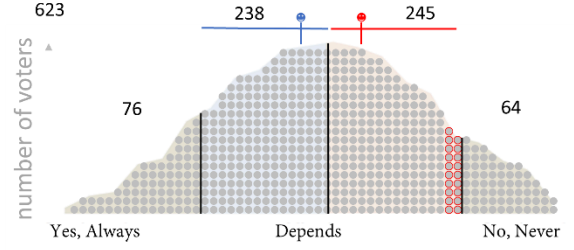
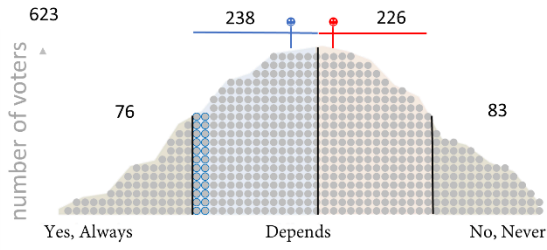
Now, should things stand as they are, *you* will likely win the election.

However, nothing stops me from doing the same thing. If I move to the right, I can improve my position over you for exactly the same reasons.



{INSERT number of voters 3}

It is in the best interest of each of us, our winning strategy, to continue this process of shifting to the fringe, little by little, to gain a slight advantage over each other. Each time, we both move further and further from the majority opinion, but pick up more and more voters. You pick up another 24 for a total of 238. I move out a little and pick up another 19 for a total of 245. You move out and get to 259; I scoot a little and get 262. You, 275; me, 277; you 287; me 289; you 293. Now the distance from our platforms to the majority opinion is about as far as it from our platforms to our furthest fringe supporters. Neither of us no longer represent the majority opinion of the people we are campaigning to represent.



{INSERT number of voters 4-12}

Eventually, we both reach a point where further movement to the fringe results in a *loss* of voters. Just as we saw a limit to how far a political platform will reach toward the fringe, likewise, there is a limit to how far a fringe platform will reach toward the center. If we go beyond that, we are not acceptable to the voters in the center, and they lose their incentive to vote.

This is our point of equilibrium, a position as far from the center as we can get without losing voters in the center.

Remember how we got here. We did not reach this fringe position because we professed an affiliation to a political party. We did not arrive here because we were paid to by some business, lobby, or social elite.

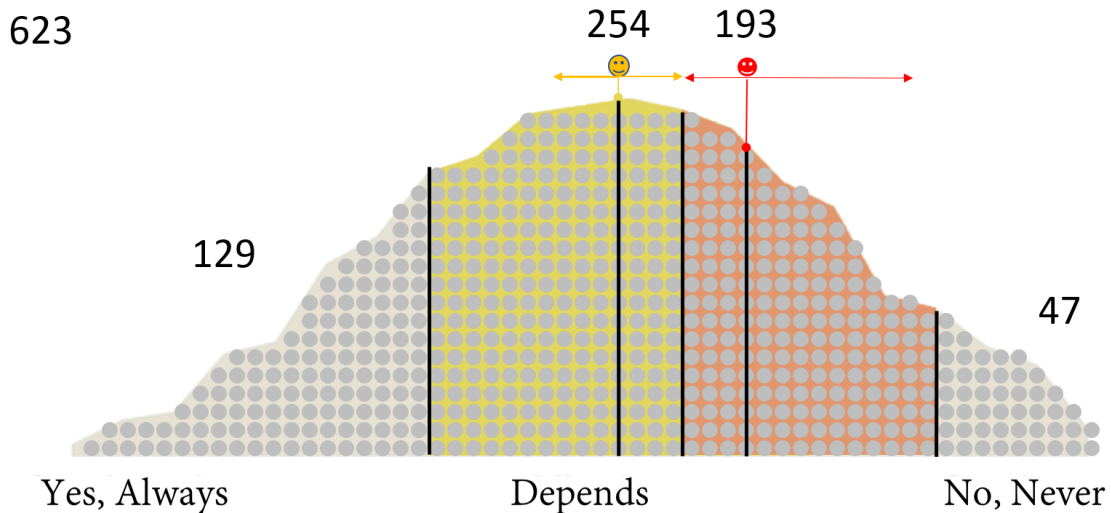
We did not collude in our campaigns. There was no dark plot to control elections. We did not have some nefarious purpose. *We did not seek out these places on the political spectrum; we, the candidates, arrived at these locations because they gave us our best chance for winning the election.*

Could there have been collusion? Could there have been a dark plot? Yes, of course, but the result is the same whether there was one or not. We don't need evil devices to get us to these points of equilibrium, and we are driven there whether such devices exist or not.

Three Candidates

You may be asking, "What happens if I stay in the center or move back to the center?" Imagine our hill of 623 opinions again. This time I, red in the next illustration, and on the political right, jump to a fringe position, dropping to 193 voters, but you, the gold colored candidate to my political left, remain at the center holding 254 voters. Another 47 voters further

to the political right are too far from my platform for them to support me. However you have 129 voters on your side, too far from your platform to support you.

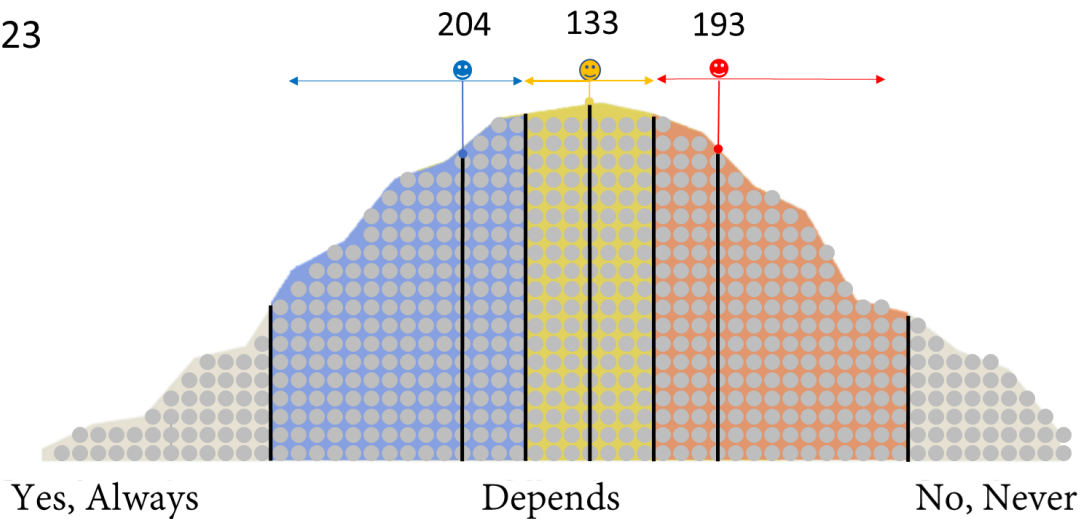


{INSERT yellow and red}

I, the red candidate, would need to move closer to you to cut your lead, but once re-established there, I could inch a short distance away, gain a tiny advantage over you, and we could start the previous process over again. But you have worse problems.

You have far more voters on your side of the political spectrum who feel no candidate represents their beliefs. This lack of representation increases the chance of a third candidate rising to your political left. And when one arises, your chance at winning the election functionally ends. When we add this third candidate to our hill, the same distance away from the majority opinion as me, they end up with 204 votes, I keep my 193 and you are reduced to only 133.

623



{INSERT blue yellow red}

You still represent the majority opinion, but now, there are not enough voters between me and the other candidate to allow you to receive the votes you need to be elected. Keep in mind that neither voters nor candidates see this public opinion curve. Our rational voters simply choose the candidate who most closely represents their own political opinion.

Thomas Palfrey, a professor of economics and political science at the California Institute of Technology, demonstrated a mathematical proof that "... an equilibrium configuration of the two established parties in a winner-take-all system (when it exists) will have one leftist party and one party right of center, which are jointly situated so that *no third party can enter the competition and win.*"⁸³ (my emphasis).

⁸³ Thomas R. Palfrey, *A Mathematical Proof of Duverger's Law*, *Social Science Working Paper 688* (Pasadena, CA: Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology, 1998), 3, para. 2; Thomas R. Palfrey, "Spatial Equilibrium with Entry," *Review of Economic Studies* 51, no. 1 (January 1984): 139–56.

Because of this mathematical proof, I call those two platform positions on a public opinion curve (represented by the red and blue candidates in this drawing) the *Palfrey Power Positions*, and they appear to sit precisely at the point of equilibrium we found earlier when you and I crept out toward the fringe following our winning strategy.

The left and right candidates control the number of voters available to the majority opinion candidate by moving their platforms closer to or further from the majority opinion candidate. Imagine if the left and right candidates had placed their political platforms immediately to the left and right of the majority opinion candidate. Though the majority opinion candidate still represents the majority opinion of the voters, they would only receive votes from voters whose political views directly aligned with the majority opinion candidate's platform (in the diagram above, only nineteen voters sit directly in-line with the platform of the gold candidate diagram). The politically right candidate would take all of the voters to the right of the majority opinion candidate, and all those to their left would be taken by the politically left candidate.

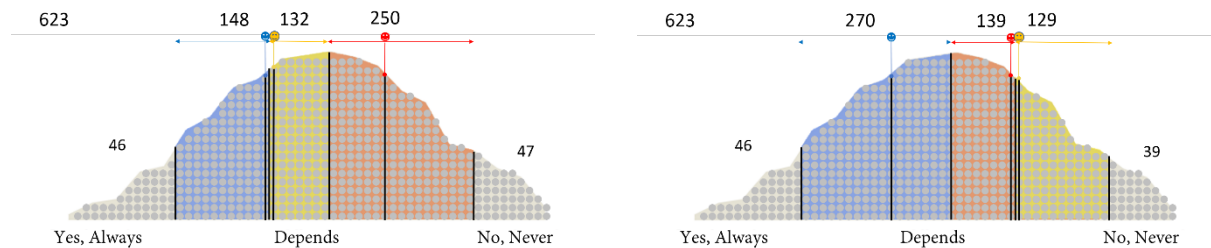
However, the left and right candidates need not position themselves *immediately* to the left and right of the majority opinion candidate to prevent the majority opinion candidate from gaining access to enough voters to win. As we saw earlier, the Palfrey Power Positions are locations that ensure no third candidate will be able to get more votes than either of the Palfrey Power Candidates as before, when there was no majority opinion candidate, the left and right candidates can gain an advantage on each other and can keep out other possible rivals by moving to these fringe positions. *The Palfrey Power Candidates control the number of voters available to the majority opinion candidate.*

The majority opinion candidate can do nothing about this. They have no way to gain additional voters, as their access to voters is dictated by the political positions of the two flanking candidates, the Palfrey Power Candidates.

There is no need for collusion or secret agreement between the Palfrey Power Candidates. These two candidates do not need to try to “control” the election. Even if they did, they would only be acting in the same manner as if they hadn’t. They sit where they sit because it gives them the best chance of winning.

And remember, in our scenario, every voter votes honestly for who they truly want.

Again, imagining you were that majority opinion candidate, you have no options for winning. You could abandon the majority opinion and move closer to one of the two other candidates, or even move outside of them, becoming more fringe than they are. This would cause the Palfrey Power candidate you moved toward to lose, but you cannot, mathematically, gain more voters than either of these two candidates.



{INSERT blue yellow red 2}

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When you look through the lens of the public opinion curve, Colorado’s 4th Congressional District race in 2006 makes perfect sense. Eric was in the center taking votes from both Marylin and Angie. The race was close with Marylin getting 109,732 votes and Angie getting 103,748⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Statistics of the Presidential and Congressional Election of November 7, 2006,” https://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/2006/2006Stat.htm.

Here's another example: in 2016, Kelly Ayotte had little difficulty securing the Republican nomination for re-election to the U.S. Senate as the representative of New Hampshire. She had originally been elected on a conservative platform, seeking endorsements from Tea Party leaders like Senator Jim DeMint and Sarah Palin.⁸⁵ During her six years in office, she acted more and more bipartisan, with her partisanship rating score (these are scores created by The Lugar Center and Georgetown University, based on how the bills of legislators gain support from the opposing party and how often the representative supports the opposing party's bills) moving from 41st most bipartisan senator in the 112th Congress to 7th in the 113th and 12th in the 114th.⁸⁶ Most every Senator up for re-election would be re-elected this year—the re-election rate for the Senate in 2016 would be 93%.⁸⁷ Senator Ayotte lost her re-election bid by 1,017 votes.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Josh Kraushaar and Manu Raju, "DeMint: A Tea Party Crowd Favorite," *Politico*, November 23, 2009, <https://www.politico.com/story/2009/11/demint-a-tea-party-crowd-favorite-029827>.

⁸⁶ The Lugar Center, "Our Work: Bipartisan Index," accessed June 16, 2025, <https://www.thelugarcenter.org/ourwork-Bipartisan-Index.html>.

⁸⁷ Kyle Kondik and Geoffrey Skelley, "Incumbent Reelection Rates Higher than Average in 2016," *Sabato's Crystal Ball*, December 15, 2016, <https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/incumbent-reelection-rates-higher-than-average-in-2016/>.

⁸⁸"2016 General Election Results." New Hampshire Secretary of State. Accessed October 13, 2025. <https://www.sos.nh.gov/elections/2016-election-results/2016-general-election-results>.

One of her competitors was an independent, Aaron Day. Aaron ran a conservative campaign, to Ayotte's right.⁸⁹ He received 17,742 votes, only 5% of the votes Senator Ayotte received, but enough to allow Democratic challenger, Maggie Hassan, to win.⁹⁰ Mr. Day said, "I came up with this plan 15 months ago in part because Ayotte interfered with our speaker's race," and went on to explain "[m]y whole point in doing this was I want to send a message to Republicans like Kelly Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, and John McCain that we're not going to play within the establishment sandbox."⁹¹

Aaron understood how winning strategies in today's elections work and knew how to weaponize them to influence the election. (Maybe he knew how to see through the lens of the public opinion curve?)

In summary: the winning strategy of our current method of elections, which is known as *plurality* or *first-past-the-post elections*, is to support the political platform at one of the two Palfrey Power Positions.

⁸⁹ It is good to note that "independent" does not mean "aligned with the majority opinion."

⁹⁰ New Hampshire Secretary of State, "2016 General Election Results," accessed October 13, 2025, <https://www.sos.nh.gov/elections/2016-election-results/2016-general-election-results>.

⁹¹ Jeff McMenemy, "Day Takes Credit for Ayotte Loss," *Foster's Daily Democrat*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.fosters.com/story/news/politics/elections/congressional/2016/11/09/independent-day-takes-credit-for-ayotte-loss/24582058007/>.

Fifty Percent Min to Win

Some regions have adopted the idea of requiring one candidate to gain a majority of votes before they can win.⁹² If that doesn't happen in the first round of the election, either a second round is held with only the top two candidates (there is a good reason to reduce the number of candidates to two, which I will reveal in Chapter 7) or an automated process is used which removes the candidate with the fewest votes, recasting ballots based individual voters' candidate rankings until a candidate receives over 50% of the votes cast in a final runoff.

Single Winner Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is an example of this sort of instant runoff voting method in which voters provide a list of alternative candidates on their ballot.⁹³ We saw this play out in the Parable of the Five Diners. In this type of election, a voter ranks all of the candidates (or all they wish to) on their ballot. However, this is less a ranking than an order of

⁹² State of Georgia, "Vote in Runoff Elections," <https://georgia.gov/vote-runoff-elections>;

Louisiana State Legislature, "R.S. 42:1410," accessed October 14, 2025,

<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=99333>; Texas Secretary of State, *Overview of Texas*

Elections, accessed October 14, 2025,

[https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/seminar/2024/36th/overview-of-texas-elections.p](https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/seminar/2024/36th/overview-of-texas-elections.pdf)

df, slide 27.

⁹³ Dennis J. Herrera, Therese M. Stewart, and Julia Moll, *Implementation of Instant Runoff*

Voting (Proposition A, March 5, 2002) (San Francisco City Attorney, July 15, 2003),

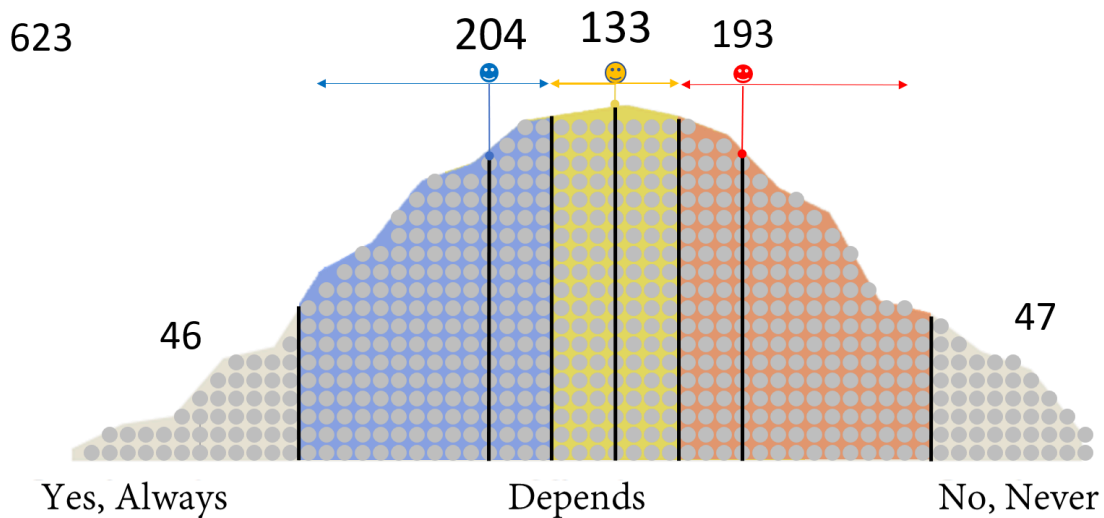
<https://www.sfcityattorney.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Implementation-of-Instant-Runof>

[f-Voting-Proposition-A-March-5-2002.pdf](https://www.sfcityattorney.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Implementation-of-Instant-Runof-f-Voting-Proposition-A-March-5-2002.pdf); RCV was originally called Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)

when voted on in San Francisco Ballot Measures.

alternatives. The voter’s ballot is cast for the one candidate with the highest ranking on their ballot. If no candidate receives over 50% of the votes cast in that round, the candidate who received the fewest votes is eliminated, and the voters’ ballots are recast⁹⁴ for the highest ranked candidate still on a voter’s ballot. If a voter has not ranked any of the remaining candidates their ballot is thrown out, which is termed, “exhausted”.⁹⁵

How does adding the fifty percent minimum (to ensure a majority winner) impact the winning strategy of the candidates?



{INSERT blue yellow red}

⁹⁴ FairVote, “Ranked Choice Voting,” accessed October 14, 2025, <https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting/>.

⁹⁵ Ballotpedia, “Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV),” accessed October 14, 2025, [https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_\(RCV\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV)).

The Palfrey Power Positions exist because no third candidate can gain more votes than either of the two Palfrey Power Candidates. As shown in this illustration, when one of these three candidates is eliminated; the *non*-Palfrey Power candidate will be the first to go.

In other words, *if you are a candidate in an RCV election or in an election with a 50% threshold, your best strategy remains to inhabit one of the two Palfrey Power Positions.*

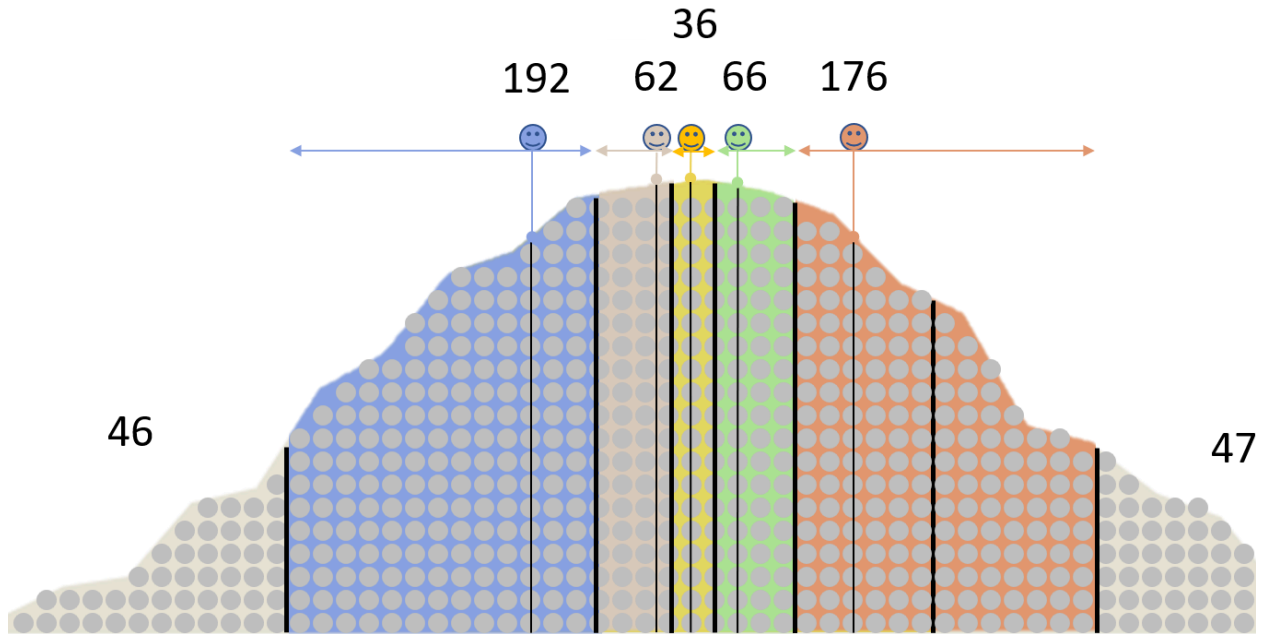
More Competition

You may believe that we are politically divided because the main political parties or some other group of elites ensures it is maintained. This duopoly “controls things,” perhaps limiting voters' options by offering only candidates who support their party's agenda and closing off minor candidates to exposure and resources. This is the lack of competition described by Gehl and Porter in their book, *The Politics Industry*.⁹⁶ If we ensured more competition in our elections, would that change the winning strategies of the candidates? Let's examine this idea through the lens of the public opinion curve.

Imagine our election and our hill of 623 opinions, but now with five candidates, all with the same exposure and resources, where all “party” candidates are chosen through open primaries. Further imagine all independent candidates are also allowed to participate and have the same exposure and resources as party candidates. So we see our candidate on the left in the left Palfrey Power Position, our candidate on the right in the right Palfrey Power Position and

⁹⁶ Katherine M. Gehl and Michael E. Porter, *The Politics Industry: How Political Innovation Can Break Partisan Gridlock and Save Our Democracy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2020).

three more candidates between them all with political platforms close to or at the majority opinion of the voters.



{INSERT blue yellow red 4}

The lens of the public opinion curve answers the question clearly and instantly.

Adding more candidates, *especially those that better represent the majority opinion*, does not make the Palfrey Power Candidates less likely to win either a plurality election or one that uses a 50% threshold, implemented either via a live runoff between the top two vote-getting candidates or automatically (RCV).

It would not matter whether candidates voice support for each other or not. A being allowed to identify a second, third, or fourth choice on a voter's ballot appears to have no effect either. A voter could number all the majority opinion candidates before the two Palfrey Power Candidates. However, those candidates will all still be eliminated one after another until only the two Palfrey Power Candidates remain, leaving those voters to either choose one of the Palfrey

Power Candidates (sometimes referred to as, the two evils as in the oft heard election phrase “the lesser of two evils”) or not vote at all in the final round. And that happens even when everyone votes honestly for the candidate that most represents them. This should not come as a surprise, as the “two evils” are still well supported and considered the best choice by those further out to the fringe than they are.

Do we see this happening in the real world?

Using official government websites, I researched all RCV elections held before 2024 in San Francisco, San Leandro, Berkeley, and Oakland, California; Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Maine; and Alaska; a total of 407 elections.⁹⁷ Ultimately, candidates who came in first or second in the first round, the two evils, won 99.5% of all RCV elections, even in elections that started with twenty candidates.⁹⁸

Support of the Palfrey Power Positions remains candidates’ best strategy for winning, regardless of how many candidates are in the election.

⁹⁷ San Francisco has used ranked-choice voting (RCV) since 2004; Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2009; Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro, California, since 2010; St. Paul, Minnesota, since 2013; Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the state of Maine since 2018; and Alaska since 2022. See the appendix for detailed data.

⁹⁸ Of the 239 elections with three or more candidates, 128 proceeded to at least a second round of voting. In those elections, either the first- or second-place candidate (sometimes referred to as “the lesser of two evils”) won 98.4% of the time (126 out of 128). See the appendix for detailed data.

Active Polarizers

The winner of our current elections becomes more or less a toss-up between the two Palfrey Power Candidates, as we divide the population almost exactly in half between them. Of the 407 RCV elections I examined, the average percentage of votes received by the winner in elections where RCV eliminated at least one candidate was 55%.

In the 58 U.S. presidential elections following the presidency of George Washington, 31 have been won by a liberal leaning candidate, and 29 by a conservative leaning one.⁹⁹ The average percentage of popular votes received by the winning presidential candidate in all elections since 1824, when the popular vote began to be recorded nationally, is 51.2%.¹⁰⁰ And yet we believe that the election of a president somehow equates to representing the true desires of the population.

In *The Polarizers*,¹⁰¹ Sam Rosenfeld examines evidence of the efforts of party and government leaders, beginning in the mid-1900s, to intentionally create political division and reinforce a two-party system.

“Hugh Scott solicited the views of GOP precinct workers in the run-up to the RNC’s first postelection meeting. ‘Why don’t you me-too guys who are running the party try dropping dead?’ wrote one typical correspondent.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “United States Presidential Election Results,” last modified July 23, 2024,

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Presidential-Election-Results-1788863>.

¹⁰⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica*,. “United States Presidential Election Results.”

¹⁰¹ *The Polarizers*, page 32.

“Senate Minority Leader Kenneth Wherry spoke out at that meeting against ‘those who say we should revitalize the party by turning to the radical left and by out-promising New Dealers. A ‘me-too’ policy is the road to ruin for our party and for our nation.’”¹⁰²

Such an effort stemmed from the desire of some major political players, from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Democratic National Committee Chairman Paul Butler to President Ronald Reagan and Republican National Committee Chairman Bill Brock (so, both Democrats and Republicans), to create a clear choice for Americans between the two parties and avoid “me-too” politics. “I will offer a choice, not an echo,” stated Barry Goldwater in his announcement of candidacy for the GOP nomination in 1964.¹⁰³

“The most alarming single danger to the American political system lies in the fact that an identifiable team of Fabian operators is bent on controlling both our major political parties, under the sanction of such fatuous and unreasoned slogans as “national unity,” “middle-of-the-road,” “progressivism,” and “bipartisanship.” wrote *The National Review's* editor and publisher William F. Buckley, Jr. in their November 19, 1955 issue.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *The Polarizers*, page 32.

¹⁰³ Barry Goldwater, “Remarks Announcing Candidacy for the Republican Presidential Nomination,” *The American Presidency Project*, January 3, 1964, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-candidacy-for-the-republican-presidential-nomination>, para. 4.

¹⁰⁴ William F. Buckley, Jr., “National Review, November 19, 1955 (Vol. 1, No. 1),” *Internet Archive*, November 19, 1955, https://archive.org/details/sim_national-review-1955_1955-11-19_1_1/page/6/mode/1up, 6, para. e.

Rosenfeld concludes, “Parties matter more than ever before in shaping the dynamics and dysfunctions of modern politics and governance, but parties are also, emphatically, endogenous institutions, shaped by the work and will of historical agents.”¹⁰⁵

You may have drawn the same conclusions as Rosenfeld as you have observed our polarized political landscape. Clearly, these individuals and others have sought and continue to seek to divide society. However, we just saw how, without any nefarious purpose, we divided the population in half, and are now trying to get our faction to win because that is the winning strategy under our current system of elections.

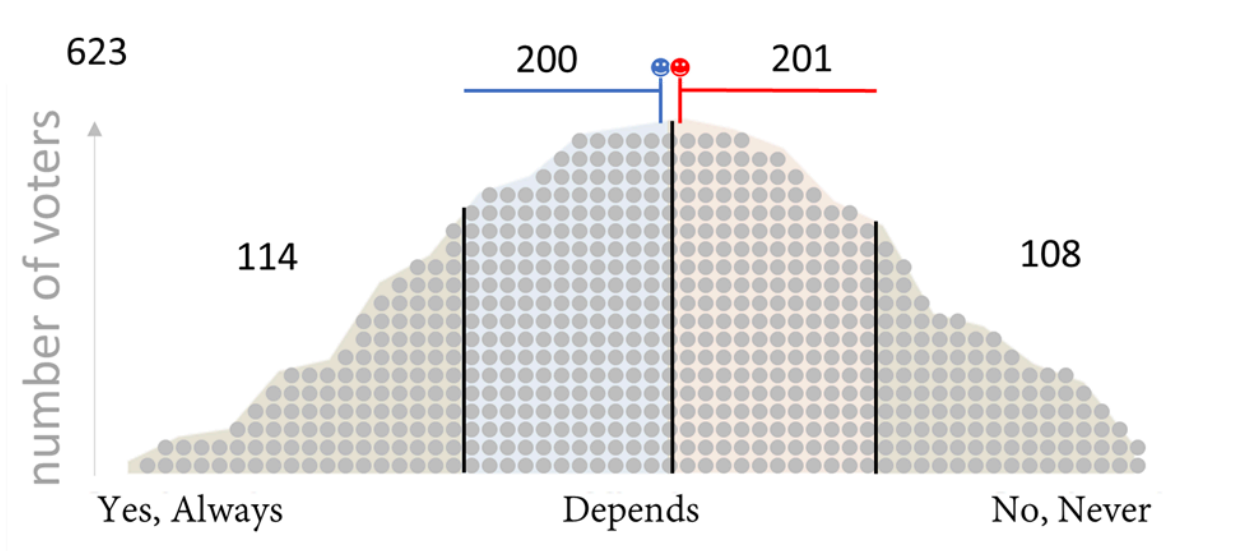
I don’t think the efforts of these polarizers ultimately matter. An analogy for me is that of the priest sacrificing the virgin to ensure the sun's rising. Sacrifice or not, that sun is coming up—the physics of the situation require it. Even if people try to divide us, it is not their actions that are doing so. A child can hold their hand up to the sky and believe they are lifting up the moon, but they are not. Conversely, if our representatives wanted to end our political division, they would likewise be ineffective. Our representatives do not appear to have either the power to unite or divide us.

Three Candidates and NEWDC

When our election scenario consisted of only you and None Of The Above (or NEWDC: new election with different candidates), we saw how your best strategy *was* to listen to all your voters *and* support *their* majority opinion platform. Does the candidate's strategy change back to listening to voters and supporting the majority opinion, if we always have NEWDC as an option in plurality or RCV elections?

¹⁰⁵ Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers*, 293.

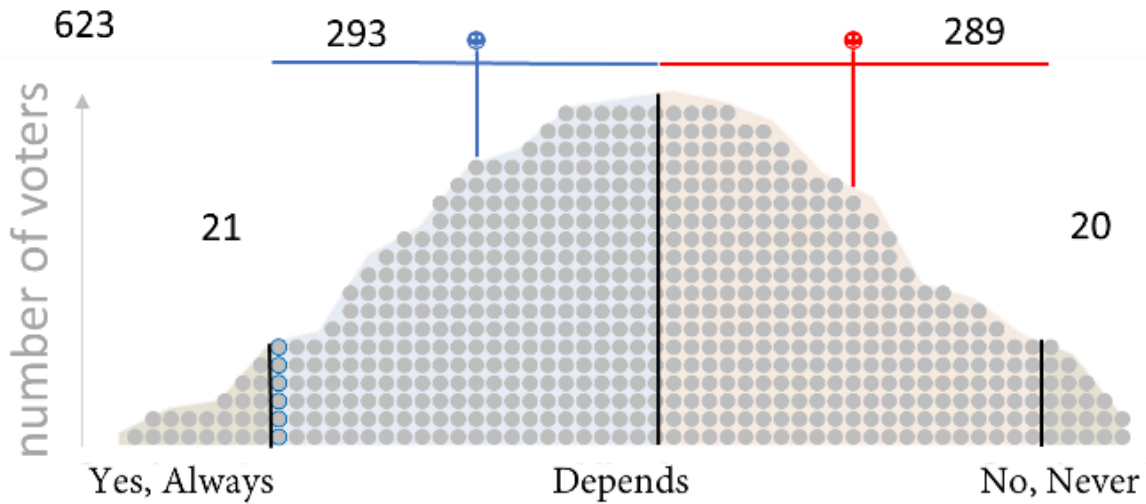
Again, we return to our previous race between you and me, where you had 200 voters, and I had 201, as we both sat next to each other on our 623 voter opinion hill.



{INSERT number of voters 2}

As noted earlier, the potential universal appeal of NEWDC is its key advantage. In this case, both voters on the extreme left and right now do have a reason to vote, and that reason is NEWDC. NEWDC could receive up to 222 votes, enough to win in the election depicted above.

However, for the reasons mentioned previously, to gain voters or prevent a potential third-party candidate from gaining traction, the two candidates are motivated to move to the Palfrey Power platforms and away from the majority opinion. Adding NEWDC has given them an additional reason to polarize; moving out as far as possible to reduce the number of voters who support NEWDC. Before when you went left and I went right, you ended up with 293 voters and I with 289. That leaves only 21 voters too far from you to support you and 20 too far from me: 41 voters only who would choose NEWDC over one of us.



{INSERT number of voters 12}

As we saw when examining elections with a 50% threshold, NEWDC would also be the first candidate eliminated. Briefly consider if the above depicted a RCV election. Would either Candidate A (293 votes), Candidate B (289 votes), or NEWDC (41 votes) be eliminated first?

Even if we add NEWDC back in, for plurality and RCV, your best strategy as a candidate remains to move to one of the two Palfrey Power Positions.

What I tried to demonstrate here is that candidates have a winning strategy imposed upon them by the rules of the game, the voting method. This imposition of the winning strategy happens regardless of how much money, media exposure, popularity, etc., the candidates have. It doesn't matter if you, as a candidate, do not want to move to a Palfrey Power Position; if you don't and your competitor does, your chance of losing increases, just as a factory chooses not to pollute the river if they can.

Our choose-one voting method is like a force of gravity continuously working to push the candidates to platforms that support either the political left or the political right, but not the

majority opinion of their voters. Our national history of bifurcation stands as the greatest testament to this fact. Even if all the candidates are saintly, kind, and wise, the one who plays the game best wins—and that means division, if we use our current election method or RCV.

Bad rules, not bad players, make for bad games. But what, specifically, is causing the bad game to be bad? It's time to expose the true cause of political division in democracies.

Chapter 7: MinVoting is the Problem

MinVoting /'mɪn-vōt-ɪŋ/ *n.* a voting method or system that permits only one point of data from each voter to be used in determining the outcome of an election.

MinVoting Creates and Sustains Our Political Division

In the previous chapters, we looked through the lens of the public opinion curve and gained a deeper understanding of a candidate's winning strategies. As I noted before, the election method doesn't care what type of election it is. It could be a primary, general, closed, open, partisan, non-partisan, city, county, state, national, or any other type of election race. In any election, anytime, anywhere, these winning strategies remain the same for candidates, and they are based on the rules of the voting method used.

I have come to use the term *MinVoting* to describe election methods that allow voters to input only one piece of data, their top choice, into the vote. It is literally impossible to provide less input into our elections than we permit from voters in MinVoting elections.

In RCV, a voter's ballot is still cast for only one candidate; the candidate with their highest ranking still in the race. The rest of the information provided on the voter's ballot is not used by the election method in that round of voting. It only looks at one data point, a voter's top choice, each round. Further, adding open primaries to RCV, as is done in "Top Four" Voting in Alaska and Final Five Voting does not change the nature of RCV. (To be clear, at the time of this writing, Final Five Voting doesn't occur anywhere; the Political Innovation Group, and Veterans for All Voters are pushing to change that.)

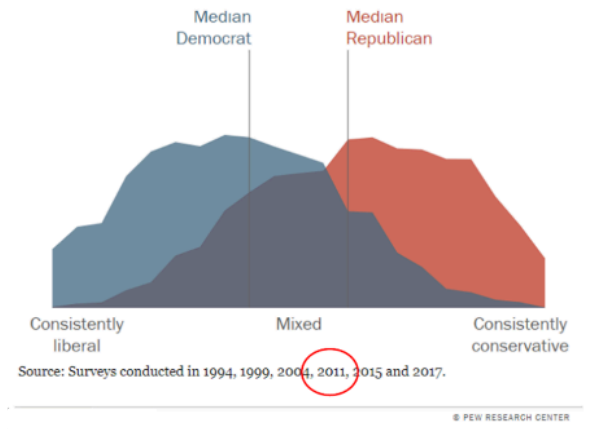
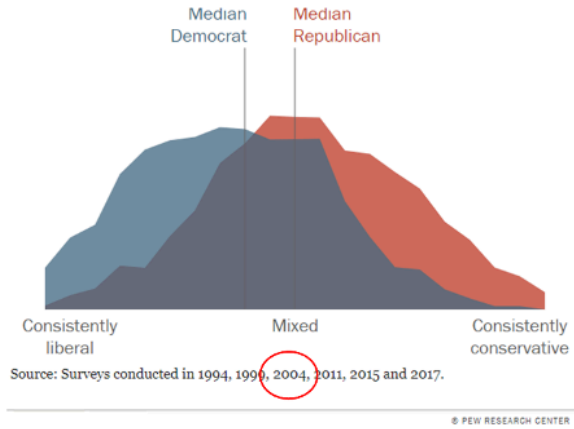
Do not be confused; *RCV is MinVoting. RCV causes political division the same plurality voting.*

Due to this limitation, voters, rationally, cast their votes for the candidate who they believe most closely represents them. As we have seen in the last chapter, this gives an advantage to candidates who position themselves at one of the two Palfrey Power positions.

I believe it is this war that we feel constantly in our everyday lives; it is why our relationships with friends and families break apart over politics; it is why we have revolts, rebellions, and civil wars; it is what has kept us locked in our current democratic dark age. Using MinVoting methods ensures the strongest, most cunning, most persuasive of the two and only two political factions become the ruling majority. It ensures that our majority opinions will not become the guiding star for our nation. Instead, we will waffle back and forth as the left and right factions fight for control and supremacy. If our election method limits us to choosing only one candidate, and candidates who support either the left or right Palfrey Power Position win most often, why should we expect to ever have more than two major political parties?

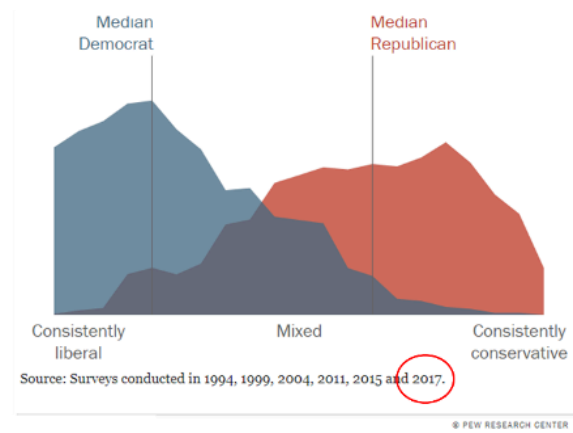
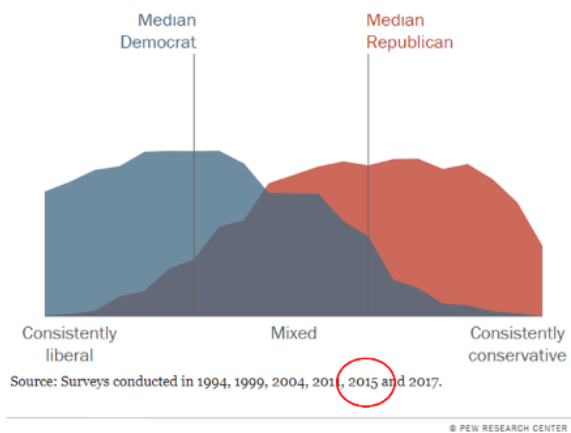
The Pew Research Center has documented public opinion curves that show how Democratic and Republican voters' political values shift in response to changes in populism. Another way they examine their data is by showing only voters who describe themselves as politically active Democrats or Republicans. This creates one mound of voters centered toward the left Palfrey Power Position and one centered toward the right. These graphs show us how their platform positioning can maximize their chances of winning, embracing left and right Palfrey Power Positions.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Pew Research Center, "The Shift in the American Public's Political Values," October 20, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/interactives/political-polarization-1994-2017/>.



{INSERT platform positioning graphic 1 }

{INSERT platform positioning graphic 2 }



{INSERT platform positioning graphic 3 }

{INSERT platform positioning graphic 4 }

The locations of the median Democrat and median Republican represent the optimal locations for support of the two major party candidates.

I believe our political parties adopt policies to target these Palfrey Power Positions, not because of a party’s “core beliefs.” These platforms simply give them the best chance of winning in our plurality and RCV elections.

MinVoting Ensures No Third Party Can Exist

The United States has more than two political parties today. According to Ballotpedia, all ballot-qualified political parties at the state level and above in each state as of June 2024, apart from the Democratic and Republican Parties, included:

1. Alaskan Independence Party
2. Alliance Party of South Carolina
3. Aloha 'Āina Party
4. America First Party of Mississippi
5. American Constitution Party of Colorado
6. American Independent Party of California
7. American Solidarity Party of Florida
8. Approval Voting Party of Colorado
9. Boricua Party of Florida
10. Coalition with a Purpose Party of Florida
11. Colorado Center Party
12. Conservative Party USA
13. Constitution Party
14. D.C. Statehood Green Party
15. Ecology Party of Florida
16. Florida Forward Party
17. Florida Natural Law Party
18. Forward Party of South Carolina

19. Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis Party of Minnesota
20. Green Mountain Peace and Justice Party of Vermont
21. Green Party
22. Independence Party of Minnesota, Vermont
23. Independent American Party of Nevada, Utah
24. Independent Party of Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Oregon
25. Jeffersonian Party of Florida
26. Justice Party of Mississippi
27. Labor Party of South Carolina
28. Legal Marijuana Now Party of Minnesota, Nebraska
29. Libertarian Party
30. Maine Green Independent Party
31. Mountain Party of West Virginia
32. Natural Law Party of Florida, Michigan
33. Pacific Green Party of Oregon of Florida
34. Party for Socialism and Liberation
35. Peace and Freedom Party of California
36. Progressive Party of Oregon, Vermont
37. Reform Party of Florida, Mississippi
38. U.S. Taxpayers Party of Michigan
39. United Citizens Party of South Carolina
40. United Utah Party (now the Forward Party of Utah)

41. Unity Party of Colorado
42. Workers Party of South Carolina
43. Working Class Party of Maryland, Michigan
44. Working Families Party

Many more parties have come and gone throughout our history; however, none of these have become serious competitors for power on a national level.” Yet, a 2023 Gallup poll found that 63% of Americans felt a third major party was needed.¹⁰⁷ This percentage of Americans who have felt this way has been polling at over 50% since 2013.¹⁰⁸

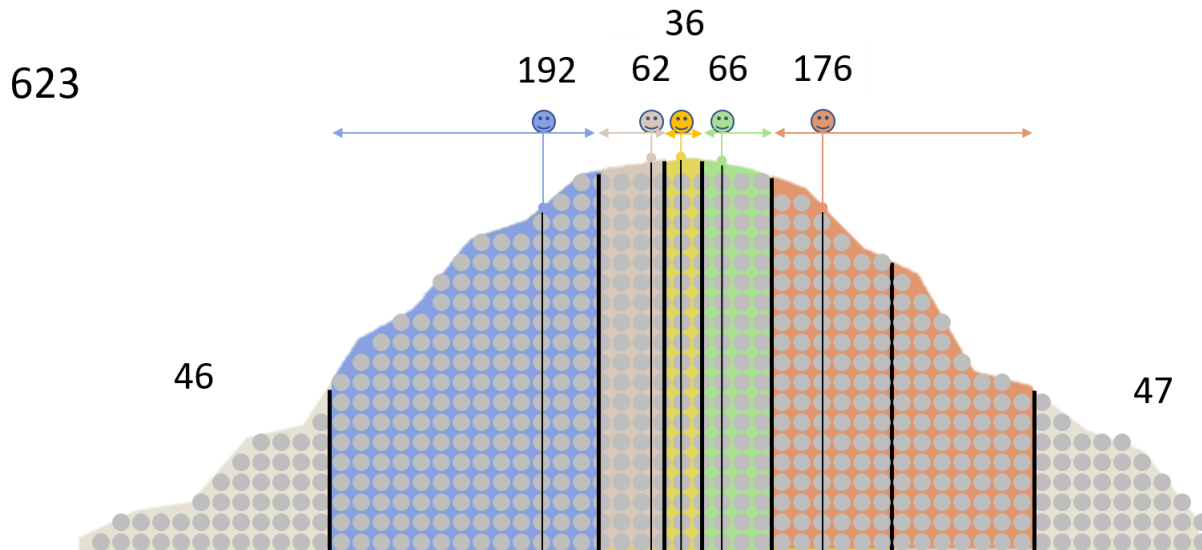
Why, then, with so many parties to choose from and so much desire for a major third party, have none of these parties risen to become that major third party?

Returning to the mathematical proofs of Thomas Palfrey, “[...] by positioning themselves neither too close together nor too extreme, the two established parties are located so that there is no ‘room’ for an entrant. Thus, given two established parties, *additional parties are not viable.*”¹⁰⁹ [emphasis added]

¹⁰⁷ Jeffrey M. Jones, “Support for Third U.S. Political Party up to 63%,” Gallup.com, February 7, 2024, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/512135/support-third-political-party.aspx>.

¹⁰⁸ Jones, “Support for Third U.S. Political Party.”

¹⁰⁹ Thomas R. Palfrey, *A Mathematical Proof of Duverger’s Law*, Social Science Working Paper 688 (Pasadena, CA: Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology, 1998), vii, 3, para. 2; In Palfrey’s proof he assumes all voter’s vote. I use the idea that voters will vote for the nearest candidate with a platform the voter can support, but there is a limited range for that support.



{INSERT blue yellow red 4}

For all the above reasons, I believe that our two-party system, our inability to have more than two major political parties, our continuous fight to win control as the ruling majority, and our suppression of the ruled minority results from, *and only from*, our use of MinVoting methods. *MinVoting is the cause of our political division*, and I would recommend that before anyone tries to start yet another political party (I'm looking at you, Andrew Yang and you, Elon Musk), to become that major third party, they need to first end the use of MinVoting methods.

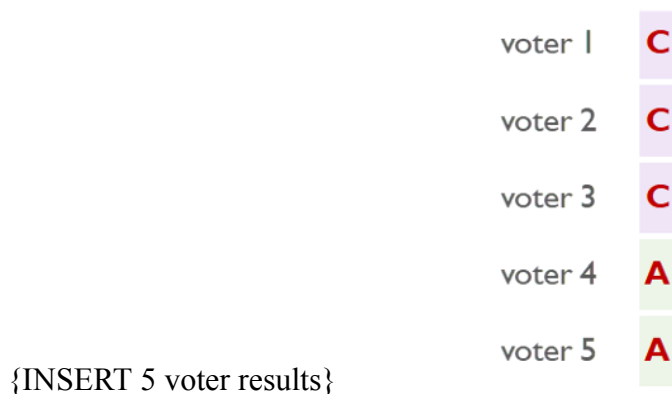
As I noted earlier, I agree that many factors influence elections, and society is complex. But this is not. Even in a hypothetically perfect world, where every other problem is solved and everyone is united, with everyone listening, being kind and thoughtful, MinVoting methods will divide us into two (and only two) factions that vie for control of the nation.

But it gets worse.

How Bad Can MinVoting Really Be?

MinVoting methods make logical sense at first glance. Since only one position needs to be filled, only one candidate must be chosen. Logically, everyone only needs to identify their favorite. These voting methods answer the question, “Which candidate do you want?” But that is not the same question as, “Which candidate do *the voters* want?”

Below is an illustration of the result of a hypothetical election between three candidates, A, B, and C. To keep it simple, there are only five voters (or, if you prefer, five equally sized blocks of one million voters). Our diagram shows how voters 1, 2, and 3, chose candidate C. Voters 4 and 5 chose candidate A.



This diagram reveals how all the voters voted, but the result is all we know. We don't know what these candidates stand for or what political party they may belong to. We don't know the voters' demographics or whether they voted honestly. We don't even know what this election is for. This could be national, state, local, partisan, non-partisan, general, primary, open, or a closed election. We don't know why the voters voted this way, just that they did.

Using plurality voting, the result is this:

Three voters voted for Candidate C, and two for Candidate A. No voter chose Candidate B. (This could also be an RCV election or one that required a 50% threshold, as that threshold was achieved on the first round. Recall that no rankings from voters in RCV elections below a voter's top choice are used, if the election ends in the first round.)

We may think Candidate C won by a landslide (assuming five large blocks of voters and not just five voters). As a point of comparison, only on four occasions in US history has a presidential candidate even received as much as 60% of the popular vote, with the largest being 61% (Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964).¹¹⁰ In our example, the winner appears to have a *clear mandate* from the people.

We may also wonder what caused Candidate B's poor performance. But here is what we don't know from this election result: *which candidate the voters wanted to elect.*

I will walk you through the logic.

If we had allowed all candidates to be independently evaluated by all voters, it might have revealed this: (in this illustration, each voter shows how much they desired the election of each candidate by scoring them on a scale from 0- "least" to 9- "most";; the higher the score the more desired the candidate.) Here voters 1, 2, and 3 gave candidate B the lowest score, candidate C the highest of 9 points, and candidate A an also very high score of 8 points. Voters 4 and 5 also gave candidate B a score of 0, but reversed the scores of candidates A and C giving candidate A the score of 9 and candidate C the score of 8.

¹¹⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "United States Presidential Election Results: 1964," last modified August 9, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-States-Presidential-Election-Results-1788863>.

	"least"							"most"		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
voter 1	B								A	C
voter 2	B								A	C
voter 3	B								A	C
voter 4	B								C	A
voter 5	B								C	A

{INSERT independent evaluation vote}

Candidate C clearly *has a mandate (with an average score of 8.6) and appears to be a unifying politician respected by nearly everyone*. Candidate A (8.4) was also highly respected and extremely well-liked. And everyone disliked Candidate B. Plurality or RCV, delivered the best possible candidate ... *if this was how voters felt*. But we didn't know how voters felt until we allowed each candidate to be independently evaluated by each voter.

It could have been that voters 4 and 5 hated candidate C and gave the lowest score possible, a 0, with candidate B just one point higher, while still giving candidate A was 9 points.

	"least"							"most"		
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
voter 1	B								A	C
voter 2	B								A	C
voter 3	B								A	C
voter 4	C	B								A
voter 5	C	B								A

{INSERT independent evaluation vote 2}

Note that Candidate C still has 60% of the first-place picks and Candidate A has 40%. But Candidate A was the most preferred candidate and well-liked across the population, with an average score of 8.4. Candidate C, however, was a very divisive and polarizing figure, being either loved or hated. Candidate C's average this time was only 5.4.

If this was how the voters felt, the plurality and RCV candidate selection would have ignored the desires of the people and installed a very divisive force over one more supported by the entire population. Candidate B still appears universally disliked (an overall score of 0.4), but must that even be true?

What if voters 1, 2, and 3 gave candidate A the lowest score possible and put candidate B just one number behind their top choice (8 points) of candidate C (9 points)? And what if voters 4 and 5 continued to give candidate C the lowest possible score while giving candidate A their top, but also giving candidate B a score of 8?

	"least"					"most"				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
voter 1	A								B	C
voter 2	A								B	C
voter 3	A								B	C
voter 4	C								B	A
voter 5	C								B	A

{INSERT independent evaluation vote 3}

In this case, Candidate B was universally liked and both Candidates A and C were strongly divisive, both being either loved or hated by the population (sound familiar?) Again, note that Candidate C still has 60% of the first-place picks and Candidate A has 40%. Here, Candidate B has an average score of 8; Candidate C, 5.4; and Candidate A, 3.6. Maybe this had been how the voters felt, but regardless, plurality and RCV would have delivered the identical election result: Candidate C with a 60% majority, and we'd have known nothing more.

So, how did the voters really feel about the candidates? Which candidate did the voters really want to elect? When we use plurality or RCV, we have no way of knowing. Yes, if there are only two candidates, *any* voting method could have accurately told us which candidate the voters wanted to elect. That is also what I alluded to in Chapter 6; it's why many MinVoting methods must seek to reduce the race to only two candidates. It is only when there are only two candidates (or one) can MinVoting methods tell who the voters most wanted to elect. But with three or more candidates, *MinVoting methods cannot!*

Of the 407 RCV elections I looked at, approximately 59% had three or more candidates.¹¹¹ If we consider that percentage as representative of the number of candidates in elections on the whole, from the school boards to the senate, we must conclude that:

In over half of all elections held in the United States of America, we do not know which candidate the voters wanted to elect.

Can there be a more damning, terrifying description of a voting method than that it is not able to identify who the voters want to elect? That is the only function a voting method has.

You may think, “that can’t be true,” these must be fringe cases. We can’t be electing the candidates the voters don’t want. But, how can you possibly know that? How can that be more than wishful thinking on your part?

Here’s the bottom line: Which society would you rather live in if you were randomly placed as one of the voters in our example? One where the candidate with the most first-place rankings won (in which case Candidate C won in every election), or into a world that used a voting method where every candidate was independently scored by every voter, and the highest scoring candidate won (which would make Candidate C the winner in the first election, but A in the second, and B in the last)?

Which of these two societies is more likely to experience civil unrest?

¹¹¹ Of the 409 RCV elections, 59% I looked at had three or more candidates, so in my opinion, that can be generalized across elections as I did not seek specific elections but took all I could find.

Big reveal: you do get to choose which society you live in, and you are making that choice right now.

The voters in our example would never realize how badly they are being duped by their voting method. All they would ever see is that one candidate won with a 60% landslide. So, they had to be the one who the voters wanted, right? *Right?* It's even worse with RCV, because people believe they are giving more input, expressing themselves more fully, but they still get the same faulty result.

If the voters experienced one of the two latter example elections, where Candidate A or Candidate B was more liked than the winner, Candidate C, the election results would have likely felt off to the population. Voters may be shocked when their preferred candidate loses and the “crazy” candidate wins. They may erroneously believe that someone had rigged the system, that the deep state had cheated them, that the polls had been rigged, or that officials had been bought out. And some might feel they need to take action outside of the law to correct the problem. Could it be that there is so much push for election reform today, because we are sensing that something is wrong?

Don't be Discouraged

I want to acknowledge that the last few chapters may have been hard to read. Especially if you are someone who has been actively trying to make things better and may have been working to implement voting methods that you may now see differently.

You may be feeling depressed, despondent, or angry. I've been there, too, and this is what helped me move through it. In the book, *Sartor Resartus* by Thomas Carlyle, great change forces the protagonist to undergo three stages of emotional response:

1. "The Everlasting No,"
2. "The Center of Indifference," and
3. "The Everlasting Yea."

We experience the first stage when we encounter that pivotal moment in our lives when we realize that what we have been doing and thinking may be fundamentally wrong, and are compelled to view the world from a different perspective. We might use denial to keep the new understanding out, to avoid the sense that we have been wasting our time. We might be angry at society for lying to us, and ourselves for not seeing the lie. We might become depressed at how we have come so far in the wrong direction, or how what we have stood up and advocated for we now see as flawed.

We do not arrive here by choice. We had not sought a new viewpoint. However, our eyes have now been opened and we can't unsee what we have seen, unread what we have read. We must now rectify our new view of the world with our actions. This leads us to The Center of Indifference.

In the Center of Indifference, we see ourselves giving up completely. How can we be expected to change who we are and what we believe in? We've come too far; we've worked too hard, invested too much. We start to see ourselves as someone who has already paid their dues, who has already worked for the betterment of society.

With this new revelation, why shouldn't someone else take over the striving? After all, we thought we were doing the right thing this whole time, and now we have a different view of what is right. Who's to say that won't change again with the next big revelation? Why go anywhere when we can't trust ourselves to know where we need to go? We want to stop, quit, and retract to lick our wounds, happy to let the world pass us by. What did it all matter? What does it matter now? Who cares?

But that is not who we are. Every moment of our lives we are growing, like a tree. We perceive the world as we do due to our unique journey through it, and that journey continues. New vistas, new revelations, a new us; every moment of every day we are reinvented. And life has just given us a gift: new insights, new building blocks. How can that be a bad thing?

Through our realization, we can see that what we are experiencing is actually the positive part of life. We enter the Everlasting Yea. When we do, it is almost with a sense of celebration, of knowing that we have more to do; an understanding that we can still be part of the solution. We know it may not be the final answer, it may change again, and that is okay for we will continue to change as well. But this is where we find ourselves now, and it is time to get moving.

Ultimately, when we embrace the new perspective, we reignite our energy, and our world becomes brighter and greater than it has been. We go forward, again, into the world with hope. I do not wish to leave you in either the Everlasting No or the Center of Indifference. But I don't want you to move forward into the Everlasting Yea until you are ready. Grieving for what we have lost, even if it was a part of our own beliefs, takes time. I *can* promise you this: the Everlasting Yea, the dawn, is coming next, and with it, I can show you how I believe we can,

forever, end political division and ensure our representatives follow us, without anyone changing what they believe or how they behave.

With the cause of our division, MinVoting, behind us, let us examine the solution. Let me show you how we change the rules of the game so that our candidates cause us all to win. Let me introduce you to MaxVoting.

Chapter 8: MaxVoting is the Answer

MaxVoting /'măx-vōt-īng/ *n.* a voting system composed of

1. 1) a voting method where each candidate can be independently evaluated by each voter, and
2. 2) an option for voters to choose a new election with different candidates, this option being treated like any other candidate. (see. The Perkins Protocol)

In this chapter I will explain the first element of MaxVoting, MaxVoting methods. In the next chapter I will explain the second, the Perkins Protocol. Although one could implement each part separately, you need both to ensure the system works to end political division 100% of the time.

MaxVoting Method

Think about the last time you looked at products on Amazon or ratings on restaurants. There was likely a product and then some number, like 4.2, next to it, and maybe a row of five stars with 4.2 of them colored gold, or something. You could see the range was from one to five, meaning people could give the product any rating from one to five stars, and that they averaged 4.2 stars. That was not any single person's rating, a person couldn't select "4.2" stars, but as a group, that is what people who cared enough to leave a rating on that product gave it.

But what does 4.2 mean? If all the other similar products are getting overall ratings of 4.8 or even 5, it could mean that this product is one of the worst on the market. On the other

hand, if all the other similar products are getting 2s or 3s, a 4.2 may show this to be one of the best, if not *the* best product. The number by itself, doesn't mean anything. It must be looked at in the context of similar products.

You can think of MaxVoting methods as Amazon ratings for candidates. You, as the voter, rate each candidate on the voting method's scale (like 1 to 5 stars, but it could be -3 to +3 stars, or 0 to 9 stars, or whatever) to each candidate you wish. The scores are averaged and the highest average wins. What does it mean for a candidate to get a rating of 3.4? That all depends on what the other candidates received.

That's the basics anyway; we have room for variation. Maybe the scale doesn't use numbers, but, instead, uses words. Maybe if you don't rate a candidate, they automatically get the lowest score, or the highest, or maybe your non-rating simply isn't part of the candidate's average. A MaxVoting method doesn't need to use averages to find the final result. It may even include additional run-offs. The point is this: it counts as MaxVoting as long as voters can give each candidate an evaluation (a vote, a score, loud applause, etc.) that is independent of any evaluation they give to any other candidate, and all of that input goes toward determining the winner. Any MaxVoting method will work to end political division, because it changes what the candidate must do to win.

In Chapter 5, we saw a MaxVoting method used when you ran for Mayor and voters could choose any and all the candidates they wanted. It didn't matter whether or not a voter voted for you when it came to whether or not they voted for me, Candidate C, or Candidate D. In Chapter 6, in the parable of the Five Diners, the diners used a MaxVoting method when they scored each option. It didn't matter what score Emerson gave to fish when it came to how she

could score pasta. She could give them both the same score, different scores, both the highest score, or both the lowest score. She scored them *independent* of each other.

Some examples of MaxVoting methods include, but are not limited to:

- Approval voting¹¹²: vote for any and all candidates you wish, the candidate with the most votes wins.
- Score voting¹¹³: score all the candidates you wish on a scale, the candidate with the highest average score wins.
- STAR voting¹¹⁴: same as score voting, except we find the two highest scoring candidates and then the winning candidate is the one between them who was most often preferred by the voters.
- Majority judgment voting¹¹⁵: same as score voting, except we compare median scores, with ties eliminated, and the candidate with the highest median score wins.
- Vote 3-2-1¹¹⁶: same as score voting using a “dislike, neutral, like” scale, except the top three candidates are first identified, then the one with the most “dislikes” of those three is eliminated, and the candidate of the remaining two who was most often preferred by voters wins.

The details of these methods are unimportant to us as they all meet the criteria of being MaxVoting methods, and any of them will work equally well to end political division.

¹¹² Center for Election Science, “Approval Voting,” <https://electionscience.org>.

¹¹³ Center for Range Voting, “Score Voting,” <https://rangevoting.org>.

¹¹⁴ Equal Vote Coalition, “STAR Voting,” <https://www.equal.vote>.

¹¹⁵ Michel L. Balinski and Rida Laraki, *Majority Judgment: Measuring, Ranking, and Electing* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), sec. 1.6, “Majority Gauge.”

¹¹⁶ Steve Cobb, “Our Solutions,” *Unsplit the Vote*, accessed July 30, 2024, <https://unsplitthevote.org/about/solutions/>.

MaxVoting methods end political division by changing the winning strategy of the candidates from supporting one of the two Palfrey Power Positions, to listening to all of their voters in order to find, and then support, their voters' majority opinions.

As there is generally only one majority opinion within a specific group at a specific time on a specific issue, this will likely bring candidates closer to the same political platform rendering political party affiliation in elections irrelevant.

The Parable of Annie's Vacation

Annie's vacation offers another lens through which to understand how MaxVoting methods fundamentally differ from other voting methods. This story has a different focus and different conclusion than the Five Diners.

Annie wants her family to have a good time on vacation, so she asks everyone to approve or disapprove of every option. As a result, Annie learned this:

<i>Vacationers</i>	<i>Amusement Park</i>	<i>Zoo</i>	<i>Shopping Trip</i>	<i>Beach Trip</i>
<i>Annie</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Ethan</i>	1	1	1	0
<i>Ivy</i>	1	1	1	0
<i>Olive</i>	0	0	0	1
<i>Uma</i>	0	0	1	1
<i>Yancy</i>	0	1	1	1
<i>Pat</i>	1	1	1	0
Total /	4 / 3	5 / 2	5 / 2	3 / 4

Two destinations tie for the most approved, the Zoo and the Shopping trip. Although Annie already knew that Ivy didn't like shopping, she didn't know *how much* Olive and Uma

didn't like the zoo. In fact, she didn't know *how much* anyone liked either shopping or the zoo in comparison to their favorites.

Annie decided to have everyone provide their input again, but this time she asked them to assign ratings from 0 to 5 to each option to show *how much* they desired it (where "0" meant "strongly disliked," and "5" meant "strongly liked"). This is what she learned:

<i>Vacationers</i>	<i>Amusement Park</i>	<i>Zoo</i>	<i>Shopping Trip</i>	<i>Beach Trip</i>
<i>Annie</i>	5	4	2	0
<i>Ethan</i>	5	3	4	0
<i>Ivy</i>	5	4	4	0
<i>Olive</i>	0	2	1	5
<i>Uma</i>	0	2	4	5
<i>Yancy</i>	0	4	3	5
<i>Pat</i>	5	4	3	0
<i>Total</i>	20	23	21	15

Now Annie knew how much each family member desired each choice in relation to all the other choices. Now she could tell how much her family, *as a family*, desired each option. And so, the family went to the zoo as it was the best choice *for the family*.

Although three family members were less satisfied, Annie and the rest of the family knew that, as a family, any other choice would have resulted in more unhappiness.

If the family had used plurality voting, choosing only their favorite to vote for, the Amusement Park would have received four votes, and the Beach three. The third least desired option would have been chosen. If they had used ranked choice voting, the result would be the same.

But here is the key point to this parable: imagine you are a travel agent (a candidate), competing against other travel agencies. Which vacation location would you offer to Annie? Would it matter to you which voting method Annie used to determine their chosen destination? If you knew her family would be scoring each vacation option to decide where they wanted to go, wouldn't you have tried to identify the most desired choice of the family? Would you not offer Annie the option that best aligned with the family's majority opinion, the zoo? What vacation package do you think your competitors would offer?

If, as a travel agent or a candidate, I want the family to choose me, it absolutely matters how they are going to choose. The method determines the strategy. If they use a minimum-voting approach, I need to offer either the amusement park or the beach. If they use a majority-based method, I need to offer either the zoo or the shopping trip. And if they are scoring their options, I need to offer the zoo.

Under a scoring system, *every serious competitor* is pushed toward the same conclusion: offer the zoo. Any other option reduces the chance of success.

When a MaxVoting method is used, the candidate must seek out what the population's majority opinion is. When plurality is used, they are best to limit themselves to understanding people's top choice.

[MaxVoting's Secret](#)

I have been making some assumptions, specifically that 1) all the candidates are identical, differing only in their political platforms, and 2) all the voters have complete knowledge about every candidate and vote solely based on a candidate's political platform as it relates to their own. Neither of these will be true in the real world. If no one knows a candidate's platform, it doesn't matter if it represents them. And charisma, looks, experience, race, religion, gender, disability, history, name, ethnicity, height, etc., all might affect a voter's decision, but a candidate's political platform remains the canvas upon which they paint the rest of their campaign. All of these many factors will change election to election. The pictures change, but the canvas remains the same. Using MaxVoting methods, the "canvas" pushes candidates to align with the majority opinions of their voters.

Candidates cannot be sure of which specific voters will be informed and which will not. Candidates can't be sure of which individual voters will vote and which will not. Candidates can't be sure of which voters will tend to vote for attractive, well-spoken, well-experienced individuals and which will not. Candidates can't be sure which voters will vote tactically, strategically, or honestly. So, the best a candidate can do when MaxVoting is used is assume every voter will vote and will vote for what that voter wants.

If you think the use of MaxVoting methods may not be enough to drive our candidates toward the same political platform, I would offer that we can attribute our current inescapable division into two political parties to our current use of MinVoting. I feel this stands as evidence that the MaxVoting method will have the greatest overall effect on society.

Being from Nevada, I would compare this situation to roulette. In roulette, half the numbers you can bet on are red and half are black. But there is also a 0 and a 00. That ensures

that, that when you bet on either red or black, you have less than a 50% chance of winning. Over time, bet after bet, you *will* lose and the house *will* win.

For the candidate, if they ignore the winning strategies, the odds are against them, and, over time, those candidates will lose. For MinVoting methods, winning candidates will go to the two Palfrey Power Positions; for MaxVoting methods, they will go to the majority opinions of their voters.

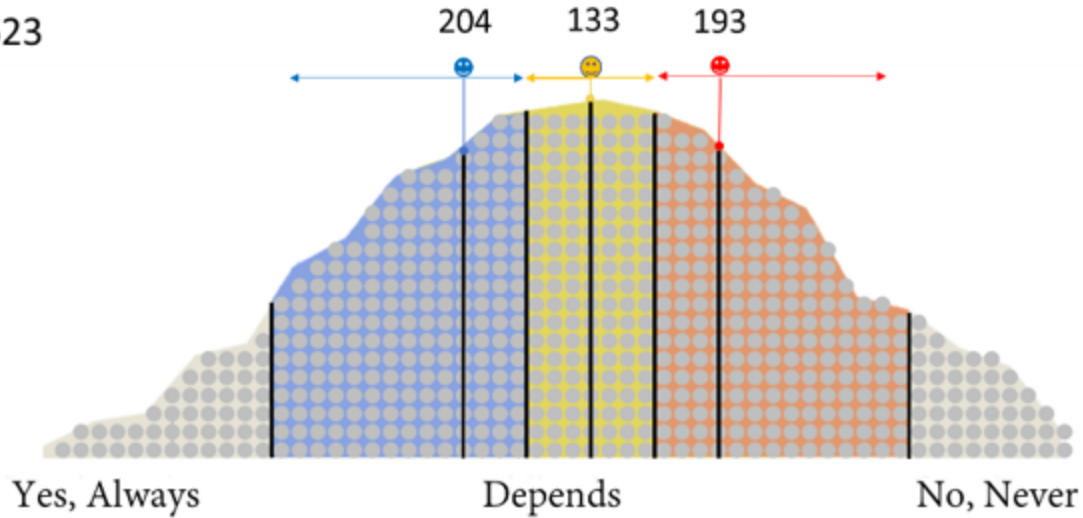
Take a moment to think about how the race or gender of the voters or candidates affects the math of Palfrey's equations. Think about how the media affects the math, or dark election funding. Consider how the "bad" or "good" nature of people affects the math. These factors affect the math of our voting like the weather on Mars does: They don't. None of these are factors in the Palfrey equations¹¹⁷; none of these are causes of our political division, so how can "fixing" any of those issues fix our political division?

John Aldrich speculates that "the major political party is the creature of the politicians, the partisan activist, and the ambitious office seeker and officeholder. They have created and maintained, used or abused, reformed or ignored the political party when doing so has furthered their goals and ambitions."¹¹⁸ Sure, but if the goal of politicians is to be elected, and since there are different strategies for winning under MinVoting methods than there are under MaxVoting, might not their behavior change if we change voting methods? Won't candidates have to play the election game differently if we change the rules?

¹¹⁷ Thomas R. Palfrey, *A Mathematical Proof of Duverger's Law*, Social Science Working Paper 688 (Pasadena, CA: Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology, 1998), 4.

¹¹⁸ John H. Aldrich, *Why Parties?: A Second Look* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 5, para. 2.

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{INSERT blue yellow red}

When you see through the lens of the public opinion curve, it becomes obvious that under MinVoting, if a majority-opinion candidate has strong and broad support, *it doesn't matter*; the Palfrey Power Candidates still hem them in and control how many votes they have access to. In MaxVoting, the stronger and broader the support, the greater the chance of the candidate's election, and no other candidate can stop them from reaching voters from anywhere on the political spectrum. They are only limited by the appeal of their platform.

*With MaxVoting methods, the candidate's goal is to receive the most votes or achieve the highest score. Since other candidates can't stop them from getting votes, the best political platform for achieving this is one that aligns with the majority opinion. And to find that, the candidates must listen to *all* their voters. As there is almost always only one majority opinion for a group of people at a specific time for a specific issue, ***all candidates are incentivized to adopt the same political platform.****

In the 1940s and 50s, strongly right-leaning Republicans referred to moderate Republicans as being engaged in “me-too-ism,” as they felt that moderate Republicans would often adopt the same positions as the Democrats, saying “me too.” Democrats complained of the same thing. George Wallace even noted with disgust regarding this view that “there ain’t a dime’s worth of difference” between the two parties.¹¹⁹ In 1950, the Committee on Political Parties outlined four criteria for responsible political parties, the fourth of which was that a nation as large as ours “requires political parties which provide the electorate with a proper range of choice between alternatives of action.”¹²⁰

I think what MaxVoting offers will *ensure* “me-too-ism,” *ensure* there is “not a dime’s worth of difference” between candidates, and *not* offer a range of alternative actions. And I say this is a good thing. Why? Because the desired “action” of the masses is *already defined*, it is the majority opinion. It is not for the political parties to offer us choices; it is for them to listen to what our choice already is, our majority opinion, and deliver it.

“*What* is our majority opinion?” isn’t the question answered by MaxVoting elections; it’s “*Who* will represent our majority opinion?”

What does it matter what party a candidate belongs to if all the candidates are seeking to support what is fundamentally the same political platform? Suppose the Democrat and Republican (and Libertarian, and Forward Party, and independent) candidates are all trying to win office by listening to the same people to find the same majority opinions and end up with

¹¹⁹ Aldrich, *Why Parties?* 176, para 3.

¹²⁰ Austin Ranney, *Curing the Mischiefs of Faction: Party Reform in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), chap. 2, n. 45.

having the same political platform on abortion, immigration, taxes, defense, Social Security, energy, and foreign policy. What relevance does their party affiliation have?

As a member of Braver Angels, I listened to the angst of people about our political division, about not being heard, about government overreach, and about the loss of their sense of self from them. None of them were out to destroy “the other side,” they just wanted to ensure the other side did not destroy them.

I know others may not see our two-party system as a problem but rather as a necessity. John Aldrich writes in his book, *Why Parties? A Second Look*, “Democracy fails when there is but one party. Instead, it is necessary to have a party system, an ongoing competition between two or more durable parties.”¹²¹

I do not see political parties as essential; not three parties, not two parties, not one party. Nor do I see them as *intentional*. I regard them as the accidental, inevitable artifacts of an un-regarded part of our political system; unplanned waste products caused by an overlooked flaw. As that flaw, our use of MinVoting, has always existed, so, too, has our division into a two-party political system.

I believe that by correcting this flaw in the system, we can circumvent political parties as we know them today, not through restrictive legislation, but by closing the wound from which they bled—the use of MinVoting methods.

You should now understand that MaxVoting is *not* a pathway to a viable third party. Rather, I believe it would end the party system in elections altogether, or perhaps better, that each individual would become their own political party; that the United States would have three

¹²¹ Aldrich, *Why Parties?* 15.

hundred million political parties, each representing a unique life journey and a unique viewpoint; each one important and each one heard.

And that is the secret of MaxVoting: *when we implement MaxVoting, we make political parties irrelevant.*

Chapter 9: The Perkins Protocol

The One- and Two-candidate Problem

Max Voting methods alone are limited.

According to my research on RCV, one- and two-candidate elections account for approximately 41% of all elections. The problem is that *all* voting methods (including all Max Voting methods) degrade to an uncontrolled candidate in single-candidate races and a divisive plurality voting election in two-candidate races. Again, this applies to all types of elections: primary, general, open, closed, *and* live runoffs.

Anytime there are only two candidates, the voting method, any voting method, works to divide us. When elections are restricted to only two candidates (such as in live two-candidate runoffs), candidates can still gain an advantage by moving toward the Palfrey Power Positions.

When elections aren't restricted to only two candidates, candidates must be ready for a third contender. Why are all voting methods the same in two-candidate contests?

- You, as a voter, only have a reason to vote if you prefer one of the two candidates (assuming no write-in candidates, or weird “protest votes”). You would not give the candidates the same score (or vote for both), as doing so would not affect the election; it would only waste your time. So, if you vote at all, you would vote for your favorite.
- In RCV, you would give one candidate a top ranking and not the other.
- In approval voting, you would approve of one candidate and not the other.
- In score voting (or any method that uses a score, like STAR, Vote 3-2-1, and Majority Judgement), you would give one candidate the highest score and the other the lowest.

You could give them any score, but if you preferred one candidate over the other, there is no reason not to give your most preferred the best chance of winning by giving them the highest score and the other the lowest.

The situation is similar when there is only one candidate, as we saw in Chapter 2. In single-candidate races, the voters have no incentive to vote, and the candidate can ignore the voters entirely. They will win even if only one voter casts their ballot for them. Applying a minimum threshold is just as meaningless, as that number generally refers to the percentage of voters who voted in that round, not the overall number of registered voters. If only one voter out of a population of a million votes for the candidate in a single-candidate race, that candidate wins with 100percent% of the vote. How can anyone say this percentage demonstrates strong support by the population for the candidate? Why do we look at numbers like these at all?

This is why the Perkins Protocol is a key feature of MaxVoting.

The Perkins Protocol is the inclusion of NEWDC (New Election With Different Candidates) in the election. As seen in Chapter 5, the protocol has three requirements:

1. NEWDC stands as a candidate that can win the election,
2. If NEWDC wins, the election is thrown out and rerun later, and
3. If NEWDC wins, none of the original candidates are allowed to participate further as candidates.

I have named this process the Perkins Protocol in honor of Laura Perkins. Laura Perkins served on the Nevada System of Higher Education's Board of Regents from 2018 to 2025, representing Las Vegas, District 1. I won't say that this idea is original to her, but after she explained it to me,

I realized that her concept resolved the one- and two-candidate problem and ensured *maximum* voter participation in *every* election and pushed candidates to seek out the majority opinion in every election.

She deserves the credit for it.

As I will show later, the Perkins Protocol will only fully empower MaxVoting methods when it comes to two-candidate elections. It can't save MinVoting.

[The Perkins Protocol in Single-candidate Elections](#)

Why is this so amazing? In Chapter 2 we saw you run as a single-candidate, unopposed. When you did, you could ignore the voters completely without affecting your chances of winning.

However, when NEWDC entered the race, your winning strategy became listening to all the voters and supporting their majority opinion. You had to get more support from the population than not, which can most easily happen by listening to all the voters and adopting their majority opinion platform. This is the impact NEWDC has on single candidate elections.

I noted before that all two-candidate races function the same regardless of the voting method. Interestingly, this remains true even when the Perkins Protocol is in effect in a single-candidate race. With the protocol active, NEWDC acts as a second candidate. We can use either MinVoting or MaxVoting methods with the Perkins Protocol in a single-candidate election and the candidate's winning strategy, regardless of the voting method, will be to listen to all the voters and support their majority opinions. The one thing that can help improve plurality and ranked choice voting.

In a single-candidate race, arguably, no one has an incentive to vote. But, with NEWDC as an option, people who don't like you can stop your election.

Likewise, the voters who want you to win *also* have an incentive to vote, because they need to ensure you do better than NEWDC. If not, they will lose you as a candidate option; you won't be able to run in the re-run.

But what about the people who don't care either about you, the race, or the office? If NEWDC wins, they, as taxpayers, will have to pick up the cost of an additional election for a race and office they don't care about. Is that how you want to spend your tax money; paying for an election you don't care about? So even the disinterested have a reason to vote, and their default will be to vote for the candidate.

With the Perkins Protocol in place, every voter in a single candidate election has a reason to vote. Ask yourself, after such an election, how much more certain will everyone be as to what the voters think of the candidate? How much more certain will everyone be regarding the legitimacy of the candidate? How much more certain will everyone be that the candidate really has the support of the majority of voters?

[The Perkins Protocol in Two-candidate Elections](#)

With MaxVoting, due to the Perkins Protocol, two-candidate races become three-candidate races with the third candidate being NEWDC, a candidate that can be attractive to people across the entire political spectrum. This stops MaxVoting from devolving into a divisive, MinVoting-like two-candidate election. When using MaxVoting, with three or more candidates, all candidates have the winning strategy of moving toward the majority opinion.

The only thing you need in order to support NEWDC is a preference for it over one or both of the candidates. NEWDC is agnostic to political ideology; it doesn't require alignment with a specific position, only a relative preference among the choices available. Voters can vote for or rate any and all the candidates they want, to include NEWDC.

Consider this example.

According to a Marist Poll taken in early 2024, almost two-thirds of voters (65%) said they did not want Biden to be president again. Six in ten (60%) said the same about Trump.¹²²

Said another way, the first sentence means 35% of voters *did* want Biden to be president again, and 40% *did* want Trump to be president again. That totaled about 75% of all voters, leaving just 25% of voters for any other candidates.

Suppose we choose approval voting as our MaxVoting method with all voters either approving or disapproving of each candidate. In that case, we can expect the voters to approve of their most desired candidate (40% for Trump, 35% for Biden, and 25% for "NEWDC"—I'm assuming only the two candidates are in the race).

Still, approval voting does not restrict a voter to one candidate, and no candidate is eliminated. Plus, NEWDC acts like any other candidate. You can approve of it along with other candidates in approval voting, or score it at different levels like other candidates in score voting.

Trump supporters are unlikely to choose Biden over NEWDC, and Biden supporters are unlikely to choose Trump over NEWDC, but how many more approvals (votes) might NEWDC garner?

¹²² NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist National Poll, "2024 Presidential Contest," *Marist Poll*, October 4, 2023, <https://maristpoll.marist.edu/polls/2024-presidential-contest/>.

This question comes down to whether love or hate motivates you. If it is love of one candidate, it would make the most sense to approve of your favorite and neither the other candidate nor NEWDC. If it is hate, we might expect you to approve all options other than the hated candidate. This would mean more approvals for NEWDC.

Notice here that NEWDC may receive votes from people who hate Donald Trump and those who hate Joe Biden—*people with completely different views would be voting for the same option*. The more the election pushes voters to hate candidates instead of strongly supporting them, the more powerful NEWDC becomes. If you are disgusted at both candidates, you may choose only NEWDC, a true indication that you have had enough of our current level of candidate selection.

The best solution for the candidates is to get as much support as possible from the entire population and highlight why they are the best choice.

That would be a better strategy than outlining why your opponent is the worst choice. You want voters to love you, which would result in votes just for you, instead of hating your opponent which would result in votes for both you and NEWDC. What is the best strategy to do that? Listen to all the people, support their majority opinion platform, and highlight why you are the best choice, not why your opponent is the worst.

What might have happened if both Trump and Biden's political platforms moved toward the majority opinion of the voters? What if both promoted roughly the same political platform? You may end up voting for both candidates and not NEWDC. If that sounds strange, remember that NEWDC is not free and could represent a cost you want to avoid, especially if you would accept either candidate.

The Perkins Protocol in Elections with Three or More

Candidates

In Chapter 4, we looked at the hypothetical situation of having four separate elections for the office of mayor.

Let's modify this a little. Consider that, instead of 372 voters covered by the majority opinion, only 244 of the 623 voters were part of it, leaving 379, the majority, feeling unrepresented and, potentially with no incentive to vote at all. But, with the Perkins Protocol in effect, even if all human candidates align with the majority opinion, they still must find ways to make their platform as inclusive as possible to beat out NEWDC and the other candidates.

By including NEWDC in all MaxVoting elections, there is incentive for candidates not only to listen to and represent their voters' majority opinions, but also to make their political platform as broad and inclusive as possible and highlight why they are the best choice.

Additionally, if voters still fall outside the majority opinion, and none of the candidates appear to support what they believe in, those voters still have a strong incentive to vote, as they have the ability to say "no" to all of the candidates in the race.

Never forget that we can't really see the public opinion curve. Even if polling companies present one, it may or may not be accurate. Just like we don't know the average height of our group (we won't even likely know who all is in our group), we won't know what the majority

opinion of our group is and thus where we sit in relation to it. The candidates won't know for certain either, they will have to make their best guess.

But no one *needs* to know it. It is enough that a person knows what they want and what all the candidates represent. Having NEWDC as an option ensures that they will always have a reason to vote, whether there is one candidate or fifty.

The savvy candidates will opt for the majority opinion with as broad a platform as possible, as it is their best chance to outdo their rivals and NEWDC.

The Perkins Protocol and MinVoting

The Perkins Protocol advantage does not translate to MinVoting methods in a two-candidate election, however. Recall in Chapter 4 when we added NEWDC to a two-candidate race.

NEWDC now must compete for votes, and the Palfrey Power Positions ensure there will not be enough votes for NEWDC to win.

What if we added the Perkins Protocol to a 50% threshold MinVoting method?¹²³ Voters will give their first choice a top ranking. That would mean (using the example above) 40% for Trump, 35% for Biden, and 25% for NEWDC. As these methods remove the lowest-scoring candidate, NEWDC is the first to go.

Why should we not expect this? I would expect NEWDC to be the perennial loser, and for the Perkins Protocol have no influence over the candidates' winning strategy.

¹²³ I'm referring to plurality voting systems that require a 50% threshold to win (or like in RCV). If no candidate reaches that threshold, the top two candidates advance to a head-to-head runoff election. In this case, the MinVoting approach being described is a 50% threshold model of MinVoting.

MaxVoting Methods Need the Perkins Protocol

The superpower behind the Perkins Protocol is that it increases the percentage of MaxVoting elections in which candidates' seek out and embrace the majority opinion from only 59% (all elections with three or more candidates) to 100%.

It also ensures all voters have an incentive to vote even if they have no candidate to support or don't care about the election.

I have personally found that most people believe themselves to be correct, moderate, and in the majority. So, we feel something is amiss when our candidate doesn't win. However, with NEWDC in the race, we can gain a much clearer understanding of voters' preferences on all the candidates, which helps us as individuals recognize where we stand in relation to our group. If we are outside the majority opinion, it then falls to us to engage more with our group to try to influence political parties or politicians.

How certain we will be that a candidate represents the majority's desires if we apply the Perkins Protocol? Everyone can say "no." Everyone has an incentive to vote. Now, if a candidate wins, we *know* they have public support—if they didn't, they couldn't have won. How less likely is it that we will default to calls of fraud or vote rigging or manipulative secret societies when we have such a clear picture of what people want?

By always including the Perkins Protocol, having NEWDC on the ballot as part of MaxVoting elections, we will truly know how well the winning candidate represents us.

That is why it is a critical component of MaxVoting.

Instituting approval voting is great...but we also need the Perkins Protocol.

Instituting STAR voting is great...but we also need the Perkins Protocol.

All MaxVoting elections, whether local or regional, open or closed, general or primary benefit from ensuring the candidates are driven to the majority opinion of their voters 100% of the time.

Chapter 10: MaxVoting in the Real World

Where's the proof? Where have elections been held using MaxVoting, and what happened there?

MaxVoting, to include the use of the Perkins Protocol, has never been used in governmental elections^[i]. However, some modern governments have implemented MaxVoting methods,

specifically Fargo, North Dakota,^[ii] and St. Louis, Missouri,^[iii] both of which implemented the

MaxVoting method “approval voting.” Here are some details on their elections.

Fargo, North Dakota^[1]

In 2020, Fargo, North Dakota, became the first modern government to use a MaxVoting method, approval voting, to elect representatives^[iv]. They used it to elect their mayor and four city commissioners. In approval voting, voters use their ballot to approve or disapprove of each candidate independent of how they approve or disapprove of any other candidate.

Seven candidates campaigned for the 2022 mayoral election, and on April 13, local radio station KFGO hosted a candidate debate^[v] in which five of the seven candidates participated.

Three candidates, Hukun Dabar, Sheri Fercho, and Michael Borgie, had strong singular themes. For Mr. Dabar, that was the creation of a department to support the improvement of the available workforce. For Ms. Fercho, it was the beautification of the city. Michael Borgie focused on improvements to the police force and public safety. None were standing elected officials.

The remaining two candidates in the debate, Tim Mahoney and Arlette Preston, were currently serving elected officials, the mayor and a city commissioner (who works directly with the mayor), respectively. Both of these candidates outlined many issues during the debate, including taxes, property values, city employment numbers, crime rates, street racing problems, affordable housing, improving neighborhoods, managing local growth, and mental health issues. Ms. Preston further noted a need for more funding for health care providers and more inclusionary housing, neither of which Mr. Mahoney challenged her on.

The first “how would you address this” question concerned the lack of low-cost housing in downtown Fargo.^[vi] This was not the focus platform of any of the three candidates not currently holding public office, who had comparatively less to say than the standing representatives noted who addressed the issue in depth.

The second issue was the increase in property taxes.^[vii] The two front-runners addressed the issue head-on with like and complementary remedies.

The third question was about the city's inability to fill office employee positions due to restrictive requirements (such as drug testing)^[viii]. The fourth was the lack of childcare. Again, and again both incumbents spoke in depth noting efforts and programs, while the other three struggled to do so.

It is important to note that no candidate *disputed* the need to support the workforce, beautify the city, or ensure the city was safe and the police were funded. The two front-runners also noted the need for all of these things. And the candidates weren't arguing with each other

over the issues, such as whether we need to make abortion legal or illegal; they all focused on how best to deliver solutions to the public's needs.

The election results^[ix] appear to me to reflect the fact Mr. Mahoney and Ms. Preston were looking across the electorate and listening to voters on all the issues that were important to them. Mr. Dabar, Mr. Borgie, and Ms. Fercho, however, through their platforms, although they presented popular concepts, seemed to me to show no real sense of what else mattered to the public.

The results of the election were:

- Timothy Mahoney, 9,755/17,655 voters approved (55.25%)
- Arlette Preston, 4,837/17,655 voters approved (27.4%)
- Shannon Roers (not in debate), 3,741/17,655 voters approved (21.19%)
- Hukun Dabar, 2,729/17,655 voters approved (15.46%)
- Michael Borgie, 1,353/17,655 approved (7.66%)
- Sheri Fercho, 924/17,655 approved (5.23%)
- Dustin Thomas Elliot (not in debate), 575/17,655 approved (3.26%)

In the Fargo election, as in all elections, many personal factors affect how voters vote, but I find the lack of disagreement among the candidates on the issues telling, and this event was a *debate*.

Of course, this may be a unicorn event, just how things are in Fargo, or another factor. It's only one election.

San Francisco, California

Let us compare the mayoral election in Fargo to another election, in this case, the special election race for mayor of San Francisco in 2018.

This election ran under RCV rules.^[x] Three of the main candidates, London Breed, Jane Kim, and Mark Leno, all had several issues they supported in common. As Atlantic reporter Russell Berman described it at the time, “all three hopefuls are staunch progressives on the issues that animate national politics: They back same-sex marriage, a higher minimum wage, and government spending, and all of them oppose President Trump’s crackdown on immigration and support San Francisco’s status as a ‘sanctuary city.’”^[xi] However, as they were using a MinVoting method, I would have anticipated their need to separate themselves from the other candidates, and move toward the Palfrey Power Positions.

As Berman described it, the campaign for mayor was “dominated by a debate over the city’s twin crises of affordability and homelessness. In press interviews, Kim and Leno have knocked Breed for siding more frequently with developers, and they’ve criticized her association with a tech investor who endorsed her candidacy at a memorial service for Lee and then helped fund super PACs backing her bid on the airwaves.”^[xii]

The Atlantic quoted Ms. Kim as saying, “We get along great. We get drinks after work. It’s not personal at all,” she said. “But London and I have been on the opposite sides of issues on

controversial votes, and Mark and I have been similarly aligned along political values and our work.”^[xiii]

In the first round of RCV, Kim and Leno each received about 24% of the vote, and Breed was just shy of 37%.^[xiv] In the final round, London Breed won out over Mark Leno 50.55% to 49.45%.^[xv]

On a side note: had the election ended after the first round (as if held under plurality voting rules), I believe many would have pointed out that Kim and Leno, together, had captured nearly 49% of the vote, while Breed captured about 37%. Therefore, had she won in a plurality election, they might have argued the will of the people had not been followed as more people favored Kim and Leno’s platform over Breed’s. I believe the fact that Breed ultimately won demonstrates the error of this assumption. But as I covered in Chapter 7: *We don’t know what the voters want when we use MinVoting methods with more than two candidates.*

Certainly, in this case, using a MinVoting method did not appear to push all of the candidates to align with the majority opinion, at least in the way it appeared to have happened in Fargo. This is far from conclusive, but I think it begins to show that there might be something to this idea of MaxVoting incentivizing candidates to listen to their voters and support their majority opinions.

Saint Louis, Missouri

St. Louis, Missouri, became the second modern political entity to adopt a MaxVoting method when voters supported approval voting in November of 2020.^[xvi] They first used it in their 2021 mayoral race, where approval voting was used in the March open primary, permitting the two most approved-of candidates to move forward to a two-candidate general election.^[xvii]

In the March primary, there were four candidates: Tishaura Jones, Cara Spencer, Lewis Reed, and Andrew Jones. Looking at the issues, we, again, see some commonalities between the candidates' stances:

Lewis Reed co-sponsored the bill to fund the Cure Violence program in St. Louis.^[xviii]

The Cure Violence program rolled out earlier in 2020, with teams of “violence interrupters” deployed to the city’s most violent neighborhoods.

Cara Spencer had been reported to support the Cure Violence program. However, she believed it would work most effectively when paired with “focused deterrence,” a strategy that was launched in fall of 2016.^[xix]

Tishaura Jone’s platform highlighted public safety. Like the plan put forth by fellow candidate and alderwoman Cara Spencer, it features a rollout of a "focused deterrence" plan, though Jones' platform describes a model to wrap police services into a "community-first" strategy that would include "social service providers, prosecutors, faith organizations, and local businesses" to stem the city's violent crime.^[xx]

Andrew Jones was noted as wanting to go after the small gangs that he believed the current city leadership already knew about.

In a debate held on February 23, the number one question asked of the candidates was how to reduce violent crime.^[xxi]

- Lewis Reed highlighted the Justice for Families program he sponsored, which provided funding for a rewards program for anonymous tips leading to the arrests of homicide suspects:
- Cara Spencer noted the need to use focused deterrence, a data-driven approach used in other cities
- Tishaura Jones also supported focused deterrence and the need to work with adjoining communities
- Andrew Jones noted his support for the police force's going after known criminal organizations and groups

Instead of countering each other's platform, the candidates appeared to offer complementary solutions. More agreement continued in their comments on incarceration.^[xxii]

We even had this comment from Cara Spencer, one of the two leading candidates: "When it comes to Tishaura [the other leading candidate], I have to say I agree with many of her *policy positions*. I think I take a different approach to governance" (interview with Jack Grone on January 31, 2021, emphasis added).^[xxiii]

This is not to say the candidates avoided personal attacks on each other.^[xxiv] Under MaxVoting, we would still anticipate candidates noting why they are better than their opponent at executing the platform. However, I expect, and believe we find, more convergence on the platform to be offered.

We saw nothing equivalent in the San Francisco election highlighted earlier. Cara Spencer and Tishaura Jones were not the “underdogs,” who were uniting against a common adversary. Can we imagine Cara’s comment being made by Jane Kim about London Breed or vice versa? With the MinVoting method RCV, underdogs and those on the same side of the political spectrum tend to voice support for each other (vote me first and them second).^[xxv]

Still, in MaxVoting, we expect to, and apparently do, see convergence by the candidates *on the issues*.

The results from the approval voting election^[xxvii] were noteworthy:

- Tishaura Jones: 57.0% of all voters approved of her.
- Cara Spencer: 46.4% of all voters approved of her.
- Lewis Reed: 38.6% of all voters approved of him.
- Andrew Jones: 14.4% of all voters approved of him.

The number of US municipal and federal elections that have been held using approval voting is limited, so we have limited data. It could be that the communities of Fargo and St. Louis are unusually more united than those where MinVoting methods are used. It could be that these were oddly positive elections supportive of the community this time. Or the lack of

animosity and the movement of candidates toward majority-opinion platforms resulted from their use of MaxVoting methods.

MaxVoting promises to end political division by incentivizing candidates to move toward the majority opinion for their best chance of winning. Even when candidates get that majority opinion wrong, the voting method does not. Yes, charisma, fame, appearance, money, gender, race, and age can all influence who voters choose to elect, but MaxVoting breaks down our political division like the warmth of spring melting the ice of winter.

From the early indications of elections in Fargo and St. Louis, MaxVoting appears to have that unifying effect. I believe that when we have instituted MaxVoting, we will no longer have to *try* to be united; we simply will be.

But that is just one of the benefits of replacing MinVoting methods with MaxVoting.

Chapter 11: How MaxVoting Changes Society

I have served as moderator in Braver Angels workshops and discussions numerous times and have worked as a back-stage Zoom event manager more times than I can count. I have heard over and over about lost friendships and broken families. Many long-term relationships ended when a person revealed they had voted for this or that presidential candidate. Many are scared to divulge who they voted for. (Recall that the winning presidential candidate only receives, on average, 51.2% of the popular vote.) One gentleman, we'll call him George, was the odd sibling out and any discussion on politics turned into a shouting match. And this does not change regardless of which party controls the legislature or is in the white house.

There is nothing in MaxVoting that will change anyone's opinion on any issue, favor one stance over another or one side of the political spectrum over the other, empower one group more than another, one financial class, one gender, one race, or one age. What it does, and what it does so well, is change the strategies of the winning candidates. Sure, you and I are opposite on the issues of immigration, guns, abortion, climate, trade, war, taxes, the whole thing, but, under MaxVoting, we still might end up voting for the same candidates. How much does that reduce the heat in the room? All of a sudden we're all in it together and candidates are campaigning based, not on what I want, not on what you want, but on what we want, as a community.

When candidates aren't trying to create or maintain majorities, but fully understand and represent their voters, they have more freedom to agree, compromise, innovate, and solve our problems. Gallup polling ^[xxxii] of Americans from September 2014 showed that the most important thing respondents wanted their representatives to do was:

- “Listen to the people/Represent the people” (10%): the highest response after “no opinion” (13%).
- “Compromise/Cooperate/Get along/Work together/End gridlock” (9%): gridlock is not an issue when the majority opinion of the voters is to work together and get it done.

The desire, need, even moral requirement to gerrymander stems from our political division into two warring factions, ensuring our government fights itself, thinking only of the next election rather than solving our problems. I once asked my mentor and friend, Victor Sapio, the secret to a good marriage. He said something to the effect that, “You will have the opportunity to cheat on your spouse, and you will have the desire to cheat on your spouse. You just have to make sure those two things never happen simultaneously.” ^[xxxi] Today, with MinVoting, we provide the ruling majority both the desire (need) to gerrymander and the ability to gerrymander, so how could they not? But when you don’t have majorities to maintain, you don’t have the desire to gerrymander. And when you don’t have the parties to fight, you don’t have the opportunity to gerrymander. Under MaxVoting, how could they gerrymander?

Money is still needed in campaigns, will still be offered, and will still be taken. But, with MaxVoting, the price goes up dramatically. The more you pay, the more likely the candidate you’re backing loses. The more you take, the more likely you are to lose. That isn’t because anyone becomes moral, or worried about campaign finances because the money is meant to move candidates to a point where they become less electable. We don’t have to watch financing, or become more moral; the system does it for us.

It is our political division that feeds these dysfunctions, and ending it will starve them out. In this chapter I want to go into detail about how MaxVoting could bring this about.

How MaxVoting Ends Gerrymandering

Elbridge Gerry, a signatory on the Declaration of Independence was governor of the state of Massachusetts. In 1812 he signed a law drawing up new senatorial voting district lines for Massachusetts. The resulting district of Essex County had the overall look to some, including artist Elkanah Tisdale, of a mythic salamander. Even though Gerry himself found the proposal “highly disagreeable,” his name is affixed to the idea of redistricting for the purpose of ensuring a party can win an election. ^[xxviii]

The practice of gerrymandering, like our other problems caused by our political division, dates back to the early days of the United States. When designing Virginia’s congressional map, Patrick Henry tried to draw district boundaries that would block James Madison from winning. ^[xxix]

Gerrymandering occurs when a population of voters is divided by the governing authority in such a way that it intentionally favors one political party over another. Either all of one group, the ruled minority, can be lumped together. Hence, that they have few representatives on the governing body or are thoroughly divided. Hence, the ruled minority is highly unlikely to

win many potential seats in the government until the next redistricting when it can be done again. [xxx]

Consider, however, what is needed to gerrymander. Establishing an allocation of districts will probably require a vote in the state legislature and *a majority* to pass the legislation. Under MinVoting methods, we have ensured either the political left or the political right is the ruling majority and has the numbers needed to gerrymander. As I noted before, MinVoting creates, for these politicians, the twisted morality of needing to protect their leadership and party so they can continue doing *the good work* their party does and they believe the people need. That means it is not just morally right for them to gerrymander; it is morally *obligatory* for them to.

With MinVoting, we provide the ruling majority with both the desire (need) to gerrymander and the ability to gerrymander, so why would they not?

However, under MaxVoting, the role of the Democratic and Republican parties should be diminished. They, like all candidates, are pushed to the same majority opinion platform, so party affiliation loses relevance. They would lack “a majority” as a party. Also, each candidate has already demonstrated their ability to gain support from the *entire* voter population. What incentive do the individual representatives have to team up and *change* the demographics of their voters?

The majority opinion of the voters changes over time, but does it make sense that it completely every four or so years completely shifts every four or so years? A representative’s work, built on the majority opinion of the voters, would likely not be torn down when a rival is elected as that rival will be elected through their support of the same population’s majority

opinions. What then is the motivation to keep out rival politicians who ultimately seek to continue the good work of the current politician?

Changing the district would make the representative's job *harder*. They would have to learn the new majority opinion of this new population, and it would likely be different from the original population. A representative's day-in and day-out job is to listen to their constituents, and they will likely already know their current constituency better than any contender. Most representatives, I believe, would come to see redistricting not as a way to secure power, but as a necessary evil that must happen every ten years to ensure manageable population sizes.

Under MaxVoting, representatives have neither the opportunity nor motivation to gerrymander, so why would they?

[How MaxVoting Curtails Dark Money and Special Interests' Influence in Elections](#)

Offering money to candidates is a way of getting the candidate to back your program or policy. In a MaxVoting world, there are two potential outcomes. Either the policy the backer wants already aligns with the majority opinion of voters, or it does not. In the first case, there is little need for the backer to curry favor with the politician since what they want is what the public wants anyway and represents the best platform for the candidate to adopt.

If the backer's desired policy does not align with the desires of the voters, there are again, two possibilities: either a significant number of voters don't care about the policy, or they do care. If they do care, the representative will have to thoughtfully weigh how far they will push themselves away from the majority opinion (increasing their chance of losing the election) versus the offered money.

With MinVoting methods, a candidate benefits from setting his platform off from competitors. In MaxVoting, the candidates are incentivized to have platforms that reflect their voters' majority opinions and thus are likely to be quite similar. As such, a MinVoting candidate can take the dark money, because that candidate might be the only option supporting an entire side of the political spectrum. In fact, they are “morally” obligated to take the bribe to help ensure they can get elected and support that unique collection of views.

However, a MaxVoting candidate likely hurts their chances by taking the money. There is a high likelihood that their voters can find other candidates that they closely align with, so why vote for the candidate who has chosen (for the sake of the campaign contribution) to be so far removed on this important issue?

The further the candidate is pushed away from the majority opinion, the less likely they are of being elected. As noted above, offering bribes to a candidate to adopt an unpopular position would make the candidate a worse investment for the person or company trying to influence the policy. This is a double counter-motivation for questionable contributions in MaxVoting elections. Taking the bribe makes the candidate less likely to win, which disincentivizes the candidate and the backer to engage in the influence-oriented contribution. It would be more efficient for the backer to try to change the majority opinion of the voters by investing in a public relations campaign.

[How MaxVoting Ends Dysfunctional Government](#)

Pew conducted surveys of over 10,000 randomly selected Americans in 2018 and 2019, and respondents from all age groups identified each of the following as “a very big problem.”^[xxxvi]

- “The ability of Democrats and Republicans to work together” (62%)
- “The way the [US] political system operates” (52%)

Recent Gallup polling shows that 80% of the public “disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job.”^[xxxvii]

What does it mean when all the political party candidates are incentivized to support the same political platforms? As I noted in Chapter 8, I believe that instituting MaxVoting will make the political party affiliation of candidates in elections largely irrelevant.

Non-partisan elections are also very common in the United States. However, even without parties in the election, a political left and right still exist. No one created the public opinion curve; it is already there. Likewise, no one created the political left, political right, Palfrey Power Positions, or majority opinion; they all already exist within any group. Pretending political division doesn't exist by using nonpartisan elections does not make it disappear.

When MinVoting methods are used, the Palfrey Power positions represent the best chance for the candidate to be elected. It isn't a matter of labeling or not labeling the political side of the spectrum a candidate is on. It doesn't even matter if we have declared parties or not. If we were to declare all elections non-partisan today and ban all political parties, our political

division would not change. What I hope I have demonstrated to you is that *political parties don't divide us; our voting method does.*

There will still be a role for parties in our future MaxVoting society. In his book, *Why Parties*, John Aldrich utilizes the concept of "parties-as-organizations," part of the tripod government analysis by Key-Sorauf.^[xxxiii] I can imagine a future where these organizations evolve into ones centered on a single issue, such as pro-choice, countering illegal immigration, or improving the environment, instead of a collection of linked positions with a broad platform (such as linking tax reduction and prayer in schools). Maybe these single-issue parties would each put out endorsements for different candidates, but even in that case, if these single-issue party positions lie too far from the majority opinion, there will be less, if any, advantage for a candidate to support them. These micro parties would likely need to focus on public engagement and education and let the candidates follow the population.

“Parties-as-organizations” refers to political parties as actors in society; groups that work to influence, educate, and mobilize the public around social and political issues.

“Parties-in-government” refers to the role of political parties as mechanisms for organizing decision-making and social choice within government institutions.^[xxxiv]

Like “parties-as-organizations,” I can envision “parties-in-government” evolving from only two parties to regional or issue-focused collectives that collaborate to produce the greatest impact for their voters. The big difference will come in *what* those representatives are trying to

achieve, specifically, supporting their voters' majority opinions, unlike today, where they work to meet the demands of their parties, which is what they are (today) elected to do.

I think the freedom that representatives would have by not appeasing one of two monolithic parties, coupled with their need to focus on meeting the needs of the majority opinion of the voters, would allow them to work together more efficiently. It isn't hard to work across the aisle if there is no aisle to work across. You don't need to be bipartisan if you aren't forced into a partisan system.

Representatives will likely work in numerous other groups focusing on the issues that matter to their voters, which frees them to support or oppose other issues that *don't*. I believe representatives will have far more flexibility to make compromises and find better solutions than they do today under the current two-party system¹²⁴, especially when functional cooperation is what the majority of voters want. [xxxv]

There will still be controversy. There will still be difficulty in passing some laws, especially when one state benefits at the expense of another. Even if all the representatives are working to support their voters' majority opinions, the majority opinions of voters in Texas are not likely to be the same as those of voters in New York. And the majority opinions of voters in Northern California probably differ from those of voters in Southern California.. Representatives will still have to make hard choices and be politically savvy. However, the majority opinions in these desperate places are often likely closer than the opposite Palfrey Power Positions. I believe

¹²⁴ Note: This isn't MinVoting, which creates the two-party system. Living within that system, in turn, constrains how representatives can function. While MinVoting is the root cause, it sits one step removed from the day-to-day behavior of representatives, where those limitations are most visible.

the chances of the government finding common ground, better solutions, and avoiding shutdown greatly increase when all candidates are elected using MaxVoting.

If we accept that Americans, maybe like you, aren't changing their mind every few years on major issues, we can easily imagine continuous forward progress toward defined goals. Like our imagined character of the Russians and Chinese, we would, at last, be able to plan out beyond the next election to five years down the road, or 10 years, or 50 years. We will no longer have to tear down what the last party created, as no party will have created it.

With the implementation of MaxVoting, *I imagine the government of the United States will receive a very high approval rating from the people, as it becomes free to support the majority opinions of the people.*

[How MaxVoting Ends the Need for Primaries, Open or Otherwise.](#)

There has been a lot of talk and movement toward using open primaries in the United States. ^[xxxviii] To the best of my knowledge, every one of these efforts still looks to use a MinVoting method (plurality) as the voting tool in the primary. Scott Kendall, an attorney central to the establishment of RCV (top-four voting) in Alaska, stated that his reason for continuing to use plurality voting in an open primary was because people are only capable of choosing one option.

“In the special election to replace Congressman Young, in the primary, there were 48 candidates. No human being on the face of this Earth is going to choose amongst 48 candidates.

The thought in the primary is very, very simple, pick your favorite, and [...] with a large enough field^[2] [...] the viable candidates rise to the surface.”^[xxxix]

Based on our previous discussions, you are likely able to guess which “viable” candidates will “rise to the surface” from these MinVoting elections primaries. And then, you can probably also guess which ones will win the RCV election. After the August, 2024 open primary, of the top four finishers, all but the leading Democrat and leading Republican withdrew. The candidates that came in fifth and sixth were put in to replace them.^[xl]

Many in the movement to enact open primaries have identified them as the way to resolve the disparity between taxpayers paying for primaries while not being allowed to participate in those same primaries. These arguments often focus on how independents are excluded,^[xli] but I would offer that this criticism does not go far enough. Using closed primaries doesn’t just mean that “independents” can’t participate in the primaries they pay for, it means no voters can participate in *all* the primaries they pay for. Even if everyone was a practicing Democrat or Republican, Democrats are required to pay for Republican primaries, but are not allowed to participate in them. The same for Republicans paying for Democratic primaries. What we truly need to do is *stop funding all primaries with public money* (which would resolve the same problem *and* free up public funds). Or even *tax* primaries (which would likely reduce any political party’s desires to use them and create even more public funds).

And it appears this idea is starting to spread. In Maryland, five plaintiffs, Serena Bryson, Kimberle Fields, Amber Ivey, Robert Sartwell, and Dona Sauerburger are claiming they have

been unconstitutionally denied their right to vote. “We are not seeking to require the political parties to allow Unaffiliated voters to vote in partisan party elections,” Boyd Rutherford, their representative in the lawsuit said in a statement. “This action is to prevent the state from funding these primaries that unconstitutionally exclude Unaffiliated voters.”^[xlii]

The original idea of direct primaries was for the membership of a political party, not the party bosses, to identify which candidate they would put their resources behind.^[xliii] As we noted before, if MaxVoting is used, if the platform that party wants is not aligned with the majority opinions, the campaign funds used will go toward making their candidate more likely to lose. And if they are aligned with the majority opinion, why would a party need to spend the money?

In a MaxVoting general election, if separate party primaries were used to identify candidates for the general election, those candidates would then have to shift their political platforms to the majority opinions of the entire population to increase their chance of winning in the general election. I would anticipate that over time, parties would consider abandoning primaries, as *the primary winner would normally start at a disadvantage* and would be pressed to abandon their primary base anyway.

If we used a single open MaxVoting primary, the winners would have already met all the qualifications for winning the general election. Voters already selected the most desired candidate and that is what the general election is designed to do. So, *if you use MaxVoting in an*

open primary with plans to hold a MaxVoting general election, you have removed the need for the primary at great savings to the taxpayer.

I would recommend that if a society moves to any form of MaxVoting in their general election, they, like those five Marylanders are trying to do, *defund primaries, and do not require general election candidates to have come up through any form of primary.* Then, don't worry about primaries ever again.

If there is concern over too many candidates running for the general election, I would offer the thoughts of The Fair Elections Act of 1993. The 1993 House Resolution Bill entitled “The Fair Elections Act of 1993” (H.R.1755—103rd Congress (1993-1994)) proposed that (it did not pass), for individuals to become candidates on a ballot for the Office of the President, Vice President, or Senator (‘though I think this could be applied to all elections), they should receive signatures equivalent to 1/10th of 1 percent of the number of votes cast in the previous elections or at least, 2,500 signatures (or some specific minimum based on the office and population)

[xlv]. Establishing such a method for all elections should ensure access for citizens to get on to the ballot. If one still has concerns about the ballot being flooded with candidates, they may find comfort in reporting from the Center for Range Voting, who claim that, in the United States, from about 1890 (when preprinted ballots came into large-scale use) up to 2005, “there have only been two cases where a ballot for a statewide office (or US presidential race) has ever had more than 10 candidates on it provided at least 2,500 signatures were required to get on the ballot (and even in those cases, there were less than 12 candidates)”[xlv].

Who Really Leads in a MaxVoting Society?

MaxVoting, I believe, incentivizes all competing candidates to accomplish the same goals and solve the same problems—those that are the majority opinions of their voters. And those goals, problems, and majority opinions *already exist*.

When you use MaxVoting, your voice will be heard, regardless of what you say.

Censoring you makes it harder to find the majority opinions, not easier, and candidates and representatives with complex, expensive political campaigns to run are not likely to be interested in anything "harder."

Remember, no one—neither you, nor I, nor the candidate—knows what the majority opinion is until we listen to all the voters, and even then, that will just be an approximation. Even if your desires do not align with the majority opinion, your voice must still be heard. It is still your voice, along with everyone else's, that contributes to understanding what your group's majority opinion is. Your voice is still part of the song that the candidates must hear and hum along with. You will not need to raise the volume or go outside the system through revolt, rebellion, or revolution to be heard.

This puts the voters, not the candidates, not the parties, not the special interests, in the driver's seat of all political decisions. If you feel the government overreaches into your life *and* that is the majority opinion of your voter population, with MaxVoting, you can expect it to stop. If you feel that your calls for tax reform, immigration reform, education reform, business reform, or other issues are falling onto deaf ears, *and* your concerns align with the majority opinion of the population, expect reform.

This may still sound strange to you because our elections have never been about deciding *who will represent us*; they have always been about deciding *who will be represented*: Will the political left or the political right be represented? Which party will wield power? Which ruling majority gets to dominate which ruled minority?

Elections today are a game, a blood sport. We fight each other because we recognize there will be a winning and losing faction, and the faction that fights the hardest will win. What is the lesson for the loser? Fight harder, fight dirtier, do everything you can to win, because otherwise you will lose your voice. *What MinVoting ensures is that we will be ruled by a faction continually at war with the rest of the population.*

What if some group seeks to keep us divided after implementing MaxVoting? I believe they will be as successful as those today who have worked to unite us under MinVoting—not at all.

I know people, such as those identified by Sam Rosenfeld who I quoted earlier, that have sought to create a divided system and still do. However, just as I don't believe these polarizers created our division, I don't believe "unifiers" can end it. To misquote James Carville, "it's the system, stupid."

You may think this will never happen; that candidates won't come closer on the platforms they support, and that party candidates will only support traditional party platforms. But imagine for a moment that you are that party's candidate. Imagine that you can pick up one percent of the voters simply by moving your platform just a little more toward the majority opinion. Consider what candidates do today to get just one percent more of the vote. How much do they pay? How hard do they fight? How far will they go today to win? Candidates pay huge amounts to advertise

and campaign in swing counties to get those few more percentage points that can make all the difference. So, under MaxVoting, if you could, without extra campaigning or advertising, greatly increase public support for you by simply moving a little closer than your opponent toward the majority opinion, don't you think you would? Don't you think your opponents would? Do you think you would even have a choice?

If this still doesn't sound right, remember the representative is being elected to represent *you*, not themselves, not their party, not their religion, not their plan, not their idea, not their business, *you*—that's you in the plural sense, as in your group of voters. What your group wants is best defined by your majority opinions. And your majority opinions already exist, regardless of what the candidate wants to offer. In a representational republic, representatives are not elected to lead you; they are elected to represent you, to follow you. *You lead them.*

With MaxVoting, the voters lead automatically. Just like those factories that go out of business if they don't pollute the river, candidates can ignore the majority opinion, but they will soon be replaced by candidates who choose to support it.

Don't we need strong leaders? Don't we need leaders with vision? **No!** We need excellent managers and intelligent problem solvers who know how to work together. Sure, they need to be able to lead their staff and agencies, but not us. Leadership is about figuring out what needs to be done. That is what your majority opinion already provides. Your group, as a group, without a vote or even a discussion, already knows what needs to be done; the representatives just need to do it.

That is what our democratic nation could be and should be. *We don't elect representatives who tell us what to do; we elect representatives whom we tell what to do.*

The Golden Age of Democracy

Due to political differences, my wife and her brother no longer talk to each other. I have four children, and I thrill to the idea that they can exist in a nation, in a world, free of our current state of caustic political rancor; that they can live in a nation with a functioning government; that they can exist free from gerrymandered districts and the fallout of political corruption and outsized, interfering special interests; that they won't have to worry about our enemies leveraging our division to tear us down; and that they won't stop talking to each other just because they hold different political views.

But that world doesn't exist, yet.

For over 240 years, we have hurt, cheated, and slandered ourselves. In 1969, we landed humans on the moon. If we had been working together since our nation's founding, how much further could we have gone by now? How much more could we have done? Where could we be right now? Living on the moon, on Mars, out amongst the stars?

Ultimately, I believe that instituting MaxVoting will empower us to create the lives, communities, and future we want. But that doesn't mean the candidates will be nice to one another, not use attack ads, or would endorse one another. They will still be the flawed humans they are today, they will just be more responsive to us, hearing us, and representing us.

I predict that candidates will prioritize making themselves seem more desirable over making their competition seem *less* desirable. Recall our discussion in Chapter 9 and the value the candidate received by emphasizing themselves positively over presenting their opponents

negatively. The more desirable a candidate can make themselves, the fewer votes or lower scores NEWDC will get.

And any candidate just needs to be closer to the majority opinion than their opponent to gain an advantage. They don't have to get it exactly right. So, though not perfect or utopian, I think the vitriol we experience in today's elections would be markedly reduced with candidates fighting to demonstrate they are the best ones to support our majority opinions and ensure our problems get solved.

MaxVoting doesn't create saints; it creates saviors.

When I design a game, the game has to work agnostic of who plays it. A system is a system because it will work inspite of humanity's nature. McDonald's built a system that can take someone with no experience and deliver a meal that people value. The system doesn't care about your age, intelligence, height, race, if you're greedy, an extravert, a nerd, or promiscuous it simply works. That is what we need, a system that unites us even when we can't accept each other, one that listens to us even when we refuse to listen to others, one that makes us better in spite of ourselves.

This could be the community, nation, and world that Gen Z, that my children, inherit; a true golden age of democracy.

The United States does not have a cultural lock on freeing its population to unite and move forward as one. But we could be the nation that leads the way.

Instead of spending half of our time getting rid of what the other political party created, we could spend all of our time moving forward in the direction the people want to go: election after election, administration after administration. And we can become an even brighter beacon

for those who struggle to have control over their lives; for those in other nations who struggle against dictators, theocracies, meritocracies ... and political parties.

I have no idea what direction the people of the United States “really” want to go in. We might become more socialistic, communistic, capitalistic, isolationistic, exclusive, inclusive, passive, aggressive, or whatever. But everywhere I have been in the world, I have found that the vast majority of people are kind, considerate, and eager to make things better for themselves and others. I have come to trust people, people in mass, and I trust you. I trust you will make the best choice for you, and through the majority opinion and our use of MaxVoting, it will result in the best choice for all of us. I will do the same. And together, without consensus, without compromise, without common ground, and also without division, we will make things better.

What Future Do You Want?

We have lived so long with political division that we might assume a politically divided society is the only way a society can exist. How can you ever *avoid* a civil war when you have a ruling majority and an ignored minority?

How can you ever *have* a civil war when the government listens and demonstrates it is listening to all of its people, all the time, and that the people truly drive its direction? The real promise of democracy is that we can live in peace with each other and collectively prosper.

In this chapter, I discussed what I believe would result from instituting MaxVoting. This is my vision of what I believe would be the *first* golden age of democracy, the fulfillment of the promise of what government-by-the-people could and should be. This includes how MaxVoting would affect gerrymandering, manipulative campaign financing, and the ending of dysfunctional, gridlocked government.

Take a moment and think about what this country could look like in ten years if everyone were to work to institute MaxVoting today. In twenty years, where could we be? In thirty years, what will we have accomplished?

We have huge challenges looming. We are just starting to see the impact of artificial intelligence; we will need more energy, water, and resources moving forward, and what happens when we cure aging? Do you think we *can't* solve climate issues *and* have cheap energy? Do you think we *can't* figure out how to ensure people who want to come to this country can arrive smoothly, quickly, and legally? Do you think we *can't* help other democracies rise as we supercharge US industry to succeed? I don't think there is a challenge we can't solve. I think we can be and do so much more than even this.

But, do you think we can do any of that while we are busy fighting ourselves? Imagine, instead, that we continued with MinVoting in any form. Where do you think we will be in 10 or 30 years? Would we even notice a difference (assuming we hadn't had another civil war)? How would 30 years from now look different from today? A poll by YouGov found that 37% of Americans think a civil war in the United States is likely in the next 10 years. ^[xlv]

MinVoting is how we pick teams for the next civil war.

What legacy do you want to leave to your children and grandchildren? What kind of present and future do you want for yourself? Hopelessness, anger, hatred, and frustration directed at the (current) ruling half of the population? Continuous fighting and manipulation to bring the other side under your control?

Look at the reverence held for our founding generation and they only *started* this experiment. This could be the generation that completes it. It is your time to decide what you want; it is time to make your choice.

The golden age of democracy could be your gift to the world, to your friends, to yourself: the ability to solve our problems, together; the ability to accomplish more than we dreamed possible in timespans shorter than we could ever imagine, together. This could be the world that is your legacy; what this generation, what you, will be remembered for.

The golden age of Democracy is not too good to be true; it is too good to be ignored.

Conclusion: Time for Your Choice

When I first developed these ideas of the cause of and what could end our political division, I didn't believe it could be so simple. So I read more, reached out to economists, mathematicians, voting advocates, and tried to prove myself wrong. I ran experiments, made complicated spreadsheets, and looked at election data, but the hypothesis held up.

If it were this easy, why hasn't someone done it before? Great question, so I went off and thought about that. If I was on the right track, why were no universities or depolarizing projects working on this? Why were advocates for STAR voting and approval voting not noting that their methods could end political division? Instead they were coming up with "fairness criteria" and talking about how many criteria this voting method or that voting method fulfilled. They talked about strategic voters and how discouraging strategic voters was the key, as if everything would be better if people voted honestly for what they want.

I'm bringing this to you today, because I couldn't demonstrate I was wrong. I came up with it because of my set of building blocks--my life, my experiences, my biology. Maybe your unique set of building blocks will allow you to find the flaw that I missed.

Or, maybe you will conclude what I have, that our political division is systemic, comes not from bad people but from the use of MinVoting methods, and can be cured by instituting MaxVoting. And that MaxVoting is the *only* way to end our political division. The choice is yours.

If you have chosen not to support MaxVoting, I truly appreciate the time and effort you have taken to consider these new ideas. Sharing this idea of how we can end political division was my only goal in writing this book. But actually ending it is up to you.

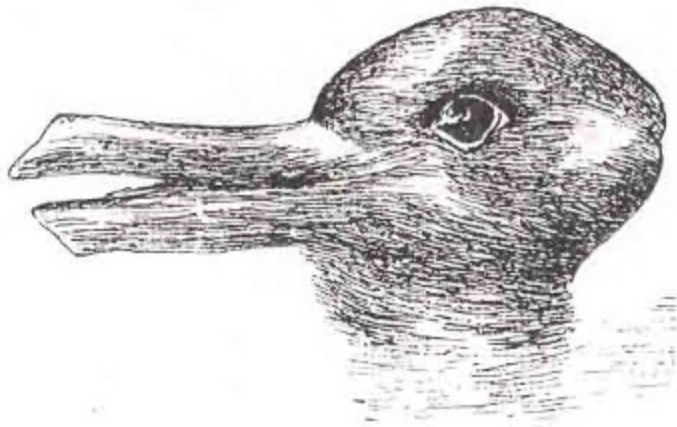
If you have chosen MaxVoting, the remainder of this chapter is yours.

It's Easy for You Now

I hope that, through this book, I have made the cause and cure of our political division obvious to you. But, though obvious to you now, it is not obvious to others. For something to be obvious, you must see it with the right lens. Consider these pictures:



{INSERT young woman/old woman}



{INSERT rabbit and duck}

The first time you come across them, you will likely see only the young woman or only the duck. But when you learn to look at them differently, you will see the old woman and the rabbit. (Or vice-versa, depending on which you happen to see first). Once you can see them both, both will be visible to you.

Viewing our political division through the lens of the public opinion curve has the same effect. Once you can do that, the relationship between the voting method and the candidates' actions is clear:

- Of course, the candidates move to the majority opinion when we use MaxVoting.
- Of course, they move to Palfrey Power Positions when we use MinVoting.
- Of course, adding a 50% threshold doesn't help.
- Of course, adding more candidates won't make a difference.
- Of course, the primaries don't matter.

All of this becomes obvious, once you know how to look at it. Getting others to see it will be the challenge.

The Explorer's Journey

It is your offering of this perspective to others that will allow movements seeking to institute MaxVoting to succeed. People need to understand the why before they are likely to act. Choosing to implement MaxVoting means choosing to share it, its explanation and its promise.

How you share it is personal to you. Perhaps you will discuss it with friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors. Maybe you will write about it in blogs, go on podcasts to discuss it, or give “TED talks” to explain it. Maybe you’ll write songs or plays about it. Maybe you’ll create pictures and art to convey its meaning and emotion. Maybe you will organize groups, hold training sessions, and create workshops. The “what” is plain; the “how” is up to you.

As you start to help others on this journey, think about what it felt like to you.

You likely began your journey believing that someone or some group was responsible for our division. That the political parties were capable and culpable of creating our division. Then, you were presented with the idea that the beliefs and policies of people are composites of their unique life journeys—not derived through logic. That we aren’t divided into good and evil, right or wrong. That, in our minds, we are good and right, and we make decisions and hold opinions based on our unique past and biology.

You saw how you, as an unopposed candidate, had no interest in the opinions of the voters you were supposed to represent. And then you saw how all of that changed when we

included NEWDC in the election, making your winning strategy “to listen to all of your voters and support their majority opinions.”

This winning strategy didn’t change based on the person running or the office you were running for, meaning we could have simultaneous elections for the same office. That pushed all candidates to the same winning strategy.

Next, you were given the lens of the public opinion curve. You saw all of us together, each with our own opinion on each facet of each issue, strung out on a spectrum from “Yes, Always” to “No, Never.” You discovered that this curve existed with any group at any time on any issue. You learned that we did not need to discuss the issue, come to a consensus, agree, or vote on it to create it.

You saw how our public opinion curve identified our majority opinion, as well as the two Palfrey Power Positions. Through that, you saw how “a majority” did not reflect the same as “the majority opinion.” You saw what the candidate had to do to win today’s election and realized that it had nothing to do with their race, religion, age, or wealth. The candidates did not have to be good or bad; they just had to want to be your representative, and that motivated them to take on the Palfrey Power Positions when we used MinVoting.

Remember how you felt when you saw how, when we used MinVoting, that ideas such as adding minimum vote thresholds, instant runoffs or additional candidates could not change this. Perhaps these realizations made you rethink what you had previously thought was a solution to our division. How did you experience your Everlasting No? Depression, hopelessness, anger, betrayal? What brought you through to your Center of Indifference and then on to your Everlasting Yea?

How did you feel when you learned candidates had to discover and support their voters' majority opinion when the election used MaxVoting? What did it mean to you to know that political parties could become irrelevant, that gerrymandering could disappear without additional legislation, that contributions designed to support specific agendas and dysfunctional government would find no place in MaxVoting elections, that primaries would be unnecessary, and our government could move forward together?

What are you hoping for in the next ten years, now that you have this lens to see our world through different eyes? I hope you are as excited as I am.

It only takes education, but, in my experience, people don't like to be told "what is what" or what to do. Through my work with Braver Angels, I have learned that people are more likely to listen after they know they have been heard. Here are some ways to present those blocks when you hear the opportunity arise. Share...

1. That our political division is not a people problem; it's a math problem. Even if everyone were kind, generous, and thinking only of the good of others, our nation would look like it does now.
2. How public opinion curves show us what we look like politically.
3. How usually every group of voters already has one majority opinion on any issue that is based on every individual member of that group's unique viewpoint; that this majority opinion must be discovered by listening to the members of the group; that the majority opinion is not created nor does it come through consensus or compromise.

4. How MinVoting limits voters to selecting one candidate per voting round (even if a ranking of alternative candidates are provided).
5. How, with MinVoting, there are two mathematical positions on a public opinion curve, as proven by Thomas R. Palfrey of the California Institute of Technology, one to the left of the majority opinion and one to the right which will ensure no third candidate or third party can get more votes than either of the two Palfrey Power candidates.
6. How, although many factors influence voters' choices, such as candidates' experience, personality, and campaigns, MinVoting favors these two power positions and ultimately forces a two-party system upon us.
7. How MinVoting is not capable of identifying what the voters want when there are three or more candidates.
8. How the concept of having a "ruling majority" is the worst possible outcome. How it doesn't necessarily represent what people want and it also creates a ruled minority. Use the stories of Annie and her vacation and the parable of the five diners to explain this.
9. How MaxVoting combines a MaxVoting method, where each candidate is independently evaluated by each voter, and the Perkins Protocol, where NEWDC is a candidate, whose winning requires a re-run of the election without participation of the previous candidates.
10. How MaxVoting methods push candidates toward the majority opinion of the voters, and that the Perkins Protocol ensures that happens in every election.

11. How the Perkins Protocol gives everyone a reason to vote in every election, even in ones they have no interest in.
12. How, if they support the instituting of MaxVoting in their county and state, they can:
 - a. End rule by either the right or left majority (and the creation of an ignored left or right minority)
 - b. Ensure candidates and representatives listen to all their voters and support their voters' majority opinions all the time
 - c. End representatives' ability to gerrymander voting districts without requiring any additional anti-gerrymandering legislation
 - d. Curtail companies and individuals' use of dark money to influence elections
 - e. Reduce governmental gridlock
 - f. End the need for primaries
 - g. Make our nation more resilient to unhealthy influence by foreign and domestic actors
 - h. Give voters a meaningful reason to vote, always, regardless of how many candidates there are or who is running
13. Or just give them this book. Let them borrow it. They can check out a copy from the library. Or buy a copy themselves.

[Finding a Community of Support](#)

Many activist groups, such as the Center for Election Science and Equal Vote Coalition, as well as numerous local approval, and STAR Voting organizations already exist. A quick Google search will help you find these and other organizations active in your community.

If there isn't a group pushing for MaxVoting (or at least a MaxVoting method) for your community, start one.

You Get to Decide our Future

You now know how I think we can end political division and the steps you must take to do it. From here on out, it is about you and your friends and your family and your co-workers doing what they think is best.

I don't really have an opinion on political issues or even candidates. In my mind it does us no good to argue about where we're going or who gets to drive the car if we have no engine. Everything, from jobs, to the economy, immigration, abortion, guns, trade, energy, AI regulation, the environment, water rights, property rights, blah, blah, blah, starts here and starts with you.

I'm going to do what I can from where I am to try to fix our government, because *everything* starts with having a functioning government. I chose to write this book. What will you choose to do?

Acknowledgments:

A book, like a life, is a collection of many events, inspirations, and ideas which flow from countless individuals. To everyone who helped me to reach this point but I neglect to acknowledge here, please forgive me and know that you do have my heartfelt thanks. This book could not have come into being without you.

To my youngest, Sawyer. It was on our long walks that you first encouraged me to put my ideas down into a book, and to get them out there. It would be another seven years before I could implement your advice. Thank you for the push. I also have to thank Jack, Auden, and Tenley, for all four of my children became my test cases for presentations, articles, and chapters, as I exploited all of them toward my goal.

Robert “Cujo” Teschner, author of *Debrief to Win*, a friend and colleague when we were together at the US EUCOM headquarters, was my first guide in how to actually write a book, and he ultimately led me to Heroic Public Speaking (HPS).

Amy and Mike Port of HPS gave me a better guide and understanding of how to reach my audience and focus my message into a simple truth, elegantly unpacked. As part of their amazing program, I met AJ Harper who became a constant source of support and inspiration for the next four years. Both in HPS and in her own Top Three Book Author’s Club, I was surrounded by a supportive community of writers and given priceless advice. Her amazing book, *Write a Must Read*, stood as a constant resource for answers and advice.

But this was always a journey of creating change; the book is meant to be a tool. At one point, I actually proposed legislation to implement a MaxVoting method. It was through my friend and co-proposer, Robin Rowe, that we actually put forward a citizen’s initiative in

Nevada. Robin, you went out on a limb, and I'm forever thankful for your faith in me and these ideas.

We also started Common Sense for Uniting America, a nonprofit based in Nevada to try to create a grass-roots movement and spread the ideas of MaxVoting more broadly. The other two who took a chance on this shaky endeavor were Beverly West and Mary "Leslie" Crouch. I will always be grateful to Bev, both for taking a chance on the non-profit, but more so as my developmental editor. As such she went above and beyond, teaching me both how to create a better book as well as contributing her own articles and take on our political division. Her sage advice ultimately guided me away from traditional publishers and toward self-publishing, and I will always fondly remember our late-night planning sessions.

Leslie Crouch, now Modzelesky, was and is another standout in putting this book together. She caught onto and supported the idea of MaxVoting from the beginning. She contributed to the non-profit and kept encouraging the work of it to move forward. During the writing of this book she took Tyler Modzelsky to be her husband and together they brought Phillipa "Plexlie" into the world, giving me even more reason to get this book done.

Leslie was one of a very supportive office environment that helped me to continue working on the book through five major rewrites and countless edits. The leader of that team was Isaac Tyler, and his positivity and motivation not only made that work environment an uplifting and creative place to be, it became a place to try out my new ideas and concepts to see what resonated with people.

I want to thank Hillary Hodge, one of my fellows in Braver Angels Abroad Europe. Your guidance in getting published was instrumental in helping me to figure out how to get this done.

It would not have happened without you, and, though it led to yet another full re-write, it made the work so much better and was much needed.

Another constant individual of support, despite how far away the success of my ideas may seem, was Kelly Biggs. He supported me in every endeavor, to include Common Sense for Uniting America, and was a source of encouragement at every turn. I can't thank you enough for your friendship over the years.

I won't pretend that I am alone or unique in bringing forward the ideas in this book, though I hope my perspective can be considered a contribution. Countless individuals have been working for years to try to improve the dialogue in the United States by implementing MaxVoting methods, though none use that term. I want to thank Warren Smith, Sara Wolk, Annie Kellen, Jameson Quinn, Felix Sargent, Brian Schmidt, Arend Castelein, Adam Maseriek, Stephen Cobb, Rida Lariaki and the countless others who have been working from the grass-root to the academic levels to identify and create a better world, I hope this book helps your efforts.

Every book has test readers and mine were a great resource of understanding how others approached this material. Above all, the contributions from Sabrina Garland, Zachary Billot, and Dona Sauerburger greatly enhanced the material in this book. Thank you for taking the time, not only to examine these new ideas, but for providing me with great feedback.

My biggest test reader was Lisa Caskey, who also was my editor and helped me get this project over the line. Working with her was amazing. Her help in scoping details, cutting fluff, honing ideas, created a book worth reading that I believe people can understand and use to make the world better.

In conclusion, above all others, I must call out Dona Sauerburger. Dona, thank you so much. No one has contributed more to my writing of this book than you. Dona has been an advocate for positive change for decades and has made helping others, especially the blind, her life's work. When she first agreed to read through a draft, she found the book equal parts exciting and frustrating. Her frustration turned to anger as I laid out my arguments for why some of her long, hard-fought, political advocacy work ultimately would lead to nothing. But instead of stopping, she continued to read and came out the other side, my staunchest supporter and a full partner in making the knowledge and promise of MaxVoting available to all. Because of her input, I fundamentally changed how I presented the material in this book, and I think we found something that the book had been missing. I can't thank her enough for her positive contribution and all that may come to pass because of it.

Appendix

Ranked Choice Voting Election Data

Several times, I have mentioned the 407 ranked choice voting elections I researched. Here they are in summary and detail. Please note, some of the links are no longer working and direct communication with that district's secretary of state's office may be required, if you wish to research them further yourselves. I am providing the links I used and recorded at the time I gathered the data, to give you a starting point.

Summary:

Of the 407 ranked choice voting elections, 239 (59 percent%) of them had three or more candidates. As discussed previously, without the Perkins Protocol, using any voting method will result in single candidates representing what they want and two-candidate races devolving into a division, with the candidates focused on the Palfrey Power positions. As such, one may or may not want to include these elections when considering the effectiveness of ranked choice voting, as there is nothing the voting method can do to correct the issue.

Of the 407 elections, only 128 (31 percent%) went more than one round. Any election that ended after one round functionally went the same as one round of plurality voting. As such, one may want to look at this subset of elections to see, when an additional round did occur, did that effect the election outcome.

What is or is not evil is a matter of individual subjectivity. However, the phrase “lesser of two evils” has been bandied about so much, to verify that the winners of ranked choice voting elections is something *other* than the lesser of two evils, these two evils need to be defined. I define them here as the top two candidates in the first race. I think that if a candidate does not

have a chance at election, there are likely not so much a concern for the voters, and would not qualify as one of the evils. The two most likely to have been elected, those placed first or second in the first election round, seem the obvious choice. When one looks at the subset of elections, with only one or two candidates, one of the evils obviously always wins. This is the same for elections that end in the first round. As the evils are the top two scoring candidates in the first round, all of those elections must be won by the evils. The question is then, how many times out of the 128 elections that went for more than one round did an evil *not* win? Two.

Of the 128 ranked choice voting elections, “evils” won 98 percent% of the time. ***When we look at all of the 407 ranked choice voting elections, the lesser of two evils won 99.51 percent%.***

Summary Table

category	result	% of all elections	% from times when more than two candidates.	% from times when more than one round
		407	239	128
% of elections:	407	100%	58.72%	31.45%
% of elections where RCV eliminated at least one candidate:	128	31%	53.56%	100.00%
% of RCV elections that end after the first round:	279	69%	46.44%	0.00%
average % of ballots thrown out in RCV election:	--	5%	8.24%	15.71%
% of elections with 1 or 2 candidates (making election method irrelevant):	168	41%	0.00%	0.00%
% of elections where RCV could but didn't impact results (result same as plurality; not including 1, 2 candidate):	111	69%	46.44%	0.00%
Average % of votes received by winner of elections:	--	66.21%	57.45%	54.81%
% of elections where the candidate who came in first in first round won election (first of two "evils"):	--	94.59%	92.05%	85.16%
% of elections where the candidate who came in second in first round won election (second of two "evils"):	17	4%	7.11%	13.28%
% of elections where the candidate who came in third in the first round won election (not won by "an evil"):	2	0.49%	0.84%	1.56%
% of RCV elections won by one of the two evils:	126	99.51%	99.16%	98.44%
% of elections not won by one of the two evils (where the candidate who came in third in the first round won election):	2	0.49%	0.84%	1.56%
% of times more than two candidates remained in last round:	--	28.75%	48.95%	4.69%

% of times a candidate who was neither first nor second in the first round was still in the final round:	--	30.71%	52.30%	10.94%
% of times voter's ballot was thrown out if you didn't choose the lesser of two "evils":	--	69.29%	47.70%	89.06%
% of elections where ranked choice voting changed the final outcome to other than plurality's result	19	4.67%	7.95%	14.84%

20 06		City Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*			M	
		Treasurer	*	4	4	61.36%		*	1	2	*	*		M	
		District 2	*	2	2	83.02%		*	1	2	*			M	
		District 4		6	2	52.51%	27.34%	*	*	1	2			M	
		District 6		8	4	50.82%	11.39%	*	*	1	2		*	*	M
		District 8	*	3	3	66.24%		*		1	2	*		*	M
		District 10	*	7	7	56.17%		*		1	2	*		*	M
20 07		Mayor	*	18	18	73.66%		*	1	2	*		*	M	
		District Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*			M	
		Sheriff	*	3	3	73.69%		*	1	2	*		*	M	
20 08		District 1		9	2	50.67%	18.10%	*	*	1	2			M	
		District 3		9	2	59.37%	23.97%	*	*	1	2			M	
		District 4	*	3	3	52.47%		*		1	2	*		*	M
		District 5	*	3	3	77.58%		*		1	2	*		*	M
		District 7	*	3	3	71.55%		*		1	2	*		*	M
		District 9		7	2	53.83%	18.73%	*	*	1	2				M
20 09	Mi nn ea po lis, M N	District 11		8	2	52.93%	31.93%	*	*	1	2			M	
		City Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M	
		Treasurer	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M	
		Mayor	*	11	11	73.60%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 1	*	5	5	50.31%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 2	*	2	2	84.05%		*		1	2	*			N
		Council Ward 3	*	5	5	65.93%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 4		4	2	58.16%	9.31%	*	*	1	2				N
		Council Ward 5		5	2	55.88%	6.73%	*	*	1	2				N
		Council Ward 6	*	6	6	52.85%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 7	*	3	3	68.24%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 8	*	5	5	74.00%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 9	*	5	5	74.00%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 10	*	4	4	72.24%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 11	*	3	3	63.62%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 12	*	4	4	64.33%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Council Ward 13	*	3	3	64.33%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Park Board Dist 1	*	3	3	74.20%		*		1	2	*		*	N
		Park Board Dist 2	*	2	2	56.35%		*		1	2	*			N
Park Board Dist 3	*	2	2	72.42%		*		1	2	*			N		
Park Board Dist 4	*	1		97.45%		*		1	2	*			N		
Park Board Dist 5		5	2	52.53%	12.19%	*	*	1	2				N		
Park Board Dist 6		4	2	55.08%	6.56%	*	*	1	2				N		
20 10	Be rk el	City Auditor	*	1		97.77%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 1	*	4	4	65.53%		*		1	2	*		*	Z
		Council Dist 4	*	4	4	53.46%		*		1	2	*		*	Z

	ey, CA	Council Dist 7	*	3	3	50.06%		*	1	2	*	*	Z	
		Council Dist 8	*	3	3	60.99%		*	1	2	*	*	Z	
		Auditor	*	2	2	66.92%		*	1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 2	*	2	2	65.68%		*	1	2	*		Z	
	Oa kla nd , CA	Council Dist 4		7	3	53.07%	17.64%	*	*	1	2	*	*	Z
		Council Dist 6	*	3	3	64.15%		*		1	2	*	*	Z
		<i>Mayor</i>	*	10	3	50.96%	13.49%		0	2	1	*	*	Z
		School Dist 2	*	1		97.71%		*		1	2	*		Z
		School Dist 4	*	2	2	68.66%		*		1	2	*		Z
		School Dist 6	*	2	2	97.47%		*		1	2	*		Z
	Sa n Le an dr o, CA	Council Dist 1	*	2	2	65.01%		*		1	2	*		Z
		Council Dist 3	*	1		97.13%		*		1	2	*		Z
		Council Dist 5	*	2	2	53.14%		*		1	2	*		Z
		<i>Mayor</i>	*						0	2	1			Z
				5	2	50.57%	13.50%							
		<i>District 2</i>	*	6	2	50.57%	21.85%		0	2	1			M
		District 4				100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
	Sa n Fr an cis co, CA	District 6	*	14	2	54.08%	34.58%	0	*	1	2			M
		District 8		4	2	55.39%	14.59%	0	*	1	2			M
		District 10		21	2	52.70%	60.10%	0	*	1	2			M
		Assessor	*	1		79.68%		*		1	2	*		M
		Public Defender	*	1		98.85%		*		1	2	*		M
		District Attorney		5	2	62.26%	18.37%	*	*	1	2			M
		<i>Mayor</i>		16	2	59.64%	28.20%	*	*	1	2			M
		<i>Sheriff</i>	*				18.00%		0	3	1	*		M
				4	2	53.54%								
20		Council Ward 1	*	4	4	60.84%		*		1	2	*	*	EE
11	St. Pa ul, M N	Council Ward 2		5	2	58.17%	8.00%	*	*	1	3	*	*	EE
		Council Ward 3	*	4	4	50.86%		*		1	2	*	*	EE
		Council Ward 4	*	2	2	77.42%		*		1	2	*		EE
		Council Ward 5	*	2	2	50.49%		*		1	2	*		EE
		Council Ward 6	*	2	2	58.41%		*		1	2	*		EE
		Council Ward 7				100.00%		*		1	2	*		EE
			*	1										
		City Attorney	*	2	2	68.98%		*		1	2	*		Z
		Council Dist 1		7	2	51.78%	30.54%	*	*	1	2			Z
		<i>Council Dist 3</i>	*	6	2	53.92%	34.88%		0	2	1			Z
		Council Dist 5		4	2	54.65%	22.42%	*	*	1	2			Z
	Oa kla nd , CA	Council Dist 7	*	3	3	58.29%		*		1	2	*	*	Z
20		Council AL		5	2	60.70%	17.07%	*	*	1	2			Z
12		School Dist 1	*	2	2	75.89%		*		1	2	*		Z
		School Dist 3		3	2	61.03%	28.21%	*	*	1	2			Z
		School Dist 5	*	2	2	54.81%		*		1	2	*		Z
		School Dist 7	*	2	2	57.26%		*		1	2	*		Z
	Sa n	Council Dist 2		3	2	50.39%	16.45%	*	*	1	2			Z
		Council Dist 4		4	2	60.99%	26.05%	*	*	1	2			Z

2013	Leandro, CA	Council Dist 6	*	2	2	54.92%		*	1	2	*		Z	
	Berkley, CA	Council Dist 2	*	3	3	58.96%		*	1	2	*	*	Z	
		Council Dist 3	*	2	2	60.72%		*	1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 5	*	2	2	54.45%		*	1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 6	*	1		95.05%		*	1	2	*		Z	
		Mayor	*	6	6	54.22%		*	1	2	*	*	Z	
	San Francisco, CA	District 1	*	3	3	53.68%		*	1	2	*	*	M	
		District 3	*	4	4	75.63%		*	1	2	*	*	M	
		District 5		8	2	56.16%	33.89%	*	*	1	2		M	
		District 7		9	2	50.27%	29.63%	*	*	1	2		M	
		District 9	*	2	2	99.25%		*		1	2	*	M	
			District 11	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*	M	
	2013	St. Paul, MN	Mayor	*	4	4	78.75%		*	1	2	*	*	GG
			Council Ward 1						*	*	1	2		GG
San Francisco, CA		Assessor	*	7	2	53.36%	22.53%							
		City Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	M	
		Treasurer	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	M	
		District 4	*	3	3	81.16%		*		1	2	*	*	M
		Mayor	*	35	2	60.88%	19.61%	*	*	1	2		O	
Minneapolis, MN		Council Ward 1	*	3	3	76.08%		*		1	2	*	*	N
		Council Ward 2	*	2	2	87.14%		*		1	2	*		N
		Council Ward 3	*	4	4	61.13%		*		1	2	*	*	N
		Council Ward 4	*	3	3	56.60%		*		1	2	*	*	N
		Council Ward 5	*	4	2	56.92%	7.52%	*	*	1	2			N
		Council Ward 6	*	6	6	63.92%		*		1	2	*	*	N
		Council Ward 7	*	1		94.89%		*		1	2	*		N
	Council Ward 8	*	1		97.74%		*		1	2	*		N	
	Council Ward 9		6	2	53.06%	10.39%	*	*	1	2			N	
	Council Ward 10	*	4	4	64.21%		*		1	2	*	*	N	
	Council Ward 11	*	3	3	67.48%		*		1	2	*	*	N	
	Council Ward 12	*	5	5	54.33%		*		1	2	*	*	N	
	Council Ward 13		5	2	51.81%	6.64%	*	*	1	2			N	
	Park Board Dist 1	*	1		97.46%		*		1	2	*		N	
Park Board Dist 2	*	2	2	67.23%		*		1	2	*		N		
Park Board Dist 3	*	2	2	75.64%		*		1	2	*		N		
Park Board Dist 4	*	2	2	79.15%		*		1	2	*		N		
Park Board Dist 5	*	1		97.97%		*		1	2	*		N		
Park Board Dist 6	*	2	2	64.80%		*		1	2	*		N		

20 14	Berkeley, CA	City Auditor	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*			Z
		Council Dist 1	*	3	3	54.60%		*	1	2	*	*		Z
		Council Dist 4	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*			Z
		Council Dist 7	*	2	2	55.42%		*	1	2	*			Z
	Oakland, CA	Council Dist 8	*	4	2	50.19%	16.84%	*	*	1	2			Z
		City Auditor	*	2	2	76.90%		*		1	2	*		Z
		Council Dist 2	*	5	2	53.03%	19.26%	*	*	1	2			Z
		Council Dist 4	*	3	3	64.15%		*		1	2	*	*	Z
		Council Dist 6	*	4	2	52.33%	16.21%	*	*	1	2			Z
		Mayor	*	15	2	63.20%	26.33%	*	*	1	3		*	Z
		School Dist 2	*	2	2	76.06%		*		1	2	*		Z
		School Dist 4	*	4	2	52.41%	25.64%	*	*	1	2			Z
		School Dist 6	*	2	2	58.53%		*		1	2	*		Z
		Council Dist 1	*	4	2	64.96%	20.37%	*	*	1	2			Z
San Leandro, CA	Council Dist 3	*	3	3	54.04%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
	Council Dist 5	*	3	3	53.84%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
	Mayor						*	*	1	2			Z	
			3	2	57.27%	10.66%								
San Francisco, CA	Assessor	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		I	
	Public Defender	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		I	
	District 2	*	2	2	79.17%		*		1	2	*		I	
	District 4	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		I	
	District 6	*	5	5	68.04%		*		1	2	*	*	I	
	District 8	*	5	5	78.37%		*		1	2	*	*	I	
	District 10	*	5	3	51.72%	8.67%	*	*	1	2		*	*	M
	Council Ward 1	*	2	2	85.75%		*		1	2	*			II
St. Paul, MN	Council Ward 2		6	2	53.23%	8.86%	*	*	1	2			II	
	Council Ward 3	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		II	
	Council Ward 4	*	2	2	61.76%		*		1	2	*		II	
	Council Ward 5	*	3	3	56.43%		*		1	2	*	*	II	
	Council Ward 6	*	3	3	74.38%		*		1	2	*	*	II	
	Council Ward 7	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		II	
	Mayor	*	11	11	55.80%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
San Francisco, CA	Sheriff	*	3	3	61.05%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
	District 3	*	3	3	52.54%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
	City Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M	
	District Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M	

		Treasurer			100.00				*	1	2	*			M	
		<i>Council Dist 2</i>	*		3	2	51.25%	17.10%		0	2	1			Z	
		Council Dist 3	*		4	4	57.04%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
		Council Dist 5	*		2	2	62.44%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 6	*		3	3	58.40%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
		Mayor			8	5	50.39%	8.16%	*	*	1	2		*	*	Z
		City Attorney					100.00		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 1	*		1		%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 5	*		2	2	80.92%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council Dist 7	*		2	2	56.43%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		Council AL	*		3	3	53.79%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
		School Dist 1	*		5	5	52.10%		*		1	2	*	*	Z	
		School Dist 3	*		2	2	75.40%		*		1	2	*		Z	
20		<i>School Dist 5</i>	*		4	2	52.39%	28.79%	*	*	1	2			Z	
16		<i>School Dist 7</i>	*		4	2	51.09%	24.70%		0	2	1			Z	
		School Dist 7	*		2	2	66.74%		*		1	2	*		Z	
		District 1			10	2	52.77%	18.84%	*	*	1	2			M	
		District 3	*		2	2	72.08%		*		1	2	*		M	
		District 5	*		2	2	52.18%		*		1	2	*		M	
		District 7	*		5	2	57.99%	22.74%	*	*	1	2			M	
		District 9	*		4	4	57.43%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
		District 11			5	2	50.94%	21.35%	*	*	1	2			M	
		Council Dist 2	*		2	2	54.39%		*		1	2	*		M	
		Council Dist 4	*		1		100.00		*		1	2	*		M	
		Council Dist 6					100.00		*		1	2	*		M	
			*		1		%									
		St. Paul, MN							*		1	2	*	*	JJ	
		Mayor	*		10	10	50.94%		*							
		Mayor	*		16	2	57.19%	7.53%	*	*	1	4		*	N	
		Council Ward 1			3	2	51.09%	3.73%	*	*	1	2			N	
		Council Ward 2	*		2	2	87.14%		*		1	2	*		N	
		<i>Council Ward 3</i>	*		4	2	55.84%	9.25%		0	2	1			N	
		<i>Council Ward 4</i>	*		4	2	51.74%	4.33%		0	2	1			N	
20		Council Ward 5			4	2	56.66%	3.18%	*	*	1	2			N	
17		Council Ward 6	*		6	6	63.92%		*		1	2	*	*	N	
		Council Ward 7	*		1		94.89%		*		1	2	*		N	
		Council Ward 8	*		1		97.74%		*		1	2	*		N	
		Council Ward 9			4	2	60.66%	10.93%	*	*	1	2			N	
		Council Ward 10	*		4	4	64.21%		*		1	2	*	*	N	
		Council Ward 11			3	2	54.44%	4.61%	*	*	1	2			N	
		Park Board Dist 1			3	2	55.29%	8.82%	*	*	1	2			N	
		Park Board Dist 2	*		2	2	67.23%		*		1	2	*		N	

		Park Board Dist 3		4	2	50.73%	7.08%	*	*	1	2			N
		Park Board Dist 4	*	2	2	79.15%		*		1	2	*		N
		Park Board Dist 5	*	1		97.97%		*		1	2	*		N
		Park Board Dist 6		4	2	50.91%	6.66%	*	*	1	2			N
	Be rk el ey, CA	Council Dist 4						*		1	2	*		P
			*	2	2	61.80%								
	M ai ne	<i>Cong Rep Dist 2</i>	*						0	2	1			CC
				4	2	50.62%	2.86%							
	Sa nt a Fe, N M	Mayor		5	2	66.19%	4.03%	*	*	1	2			H
		Council Pos 1	*	2	2	68.35%		*		1	2	*		H
		Council Pos 2	*	3	3	52.91%		*		1	2	*	*	H
		Council Pos 3				100.00%		*		1	2	*		H
		Council Pos 4		3	2	56.46%	7.27%	*	*	1	2			H
	Be rk el ey, CA	Council Dist 1		4	2	54.50%	10.71%	*	*	1	2			Q
		Council Dist 4	*	3	3	52.65%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
		Council Dist 7	*	3	3	56.21%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
		Council Dist 8	*	4	4	56.12%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
		City Auditor	*	2	2	91.66%		*		1	2	*		Q
		Council Dist. 2	*	3	3	53.70%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
	Oa kla nd , CA	Council Dist 4		7	2	54.09%	13.97%	*	*	1	2			Q
		Council Dist 6		5	2	64.26%	21.52%	*	*	1	2			Q
20 18		City Auditor	*	2	2	64.86%		*		1	2	*		Q
		School Dist 2	*	1		97.59%		*		1	2	*		Q
		School Dist 4	*	2	2	58.80%		*		1	2	*		Q
		School Dist 6	*	2	2	95.03%		*		1	2	*		Q
	Sa n Le an dr o, CA	Mayor	*	4	4	51.63%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
		Council Dist 1	*	3	3	64.82%		*		1	2	*	*	Q
		Council Dist 3	*	2	2	50.71%		*		1	2	*		Q
		Council Dist 5						*		1	2	*		Q
			*	2	2	69.87%								
	Sa n Fr an cis co, CA	Mayor		8	2	50.55%	9.69%	*	*	1	2			J
		District 2		4	2	51.91%	16.30%	*	*	1	2			M
		District 4		8	2	56.84%	25.76%	*	*	1	2			M
		District 6		4	2	50.40%	14.80%	*	*	1	2			M
		District 8	*	2	2	91.51%		*		1	2	*		M
		District 10		6	2	63.07%	21.37%	*	*	1	2			M
		Assessor	*	2	2	74.70%		*		1	2	*		M
		Public Defender				100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
			*	1		%								
20 19	Sa nt a Fe,	Council Pos 1	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		D
		Council Pos 2	*	2	2	67.00%		*		1	2	*		D

	N M	Council Pos 3	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*			D
		Council Pos 4	*	3	3	56.96%		*	1	2	*	*		D
	St. Pa ul, M N	Council Ward 1		4	2	53.13%	5.72%	*	*	1	2			FF
		Council Ward 2	*	5	5	62.23%		*		1	2	*	*	KK
		Council Ward 3	*	2	2	60.80%		*		1	2	*		KK
		Council Ward 4	*	3	3	59.37%		*		1	2	*	*	KK
		Council Ward 5	*	4	4	53.53%		*		1	2	*	*	KK
		Council Ward 6		6	2	59.56%	15.78%	*	*	1	2			KK
		Council Ward 7	*	4	4	62.36%		*		1	2	*	*	K
	Sa n Fr an cis co, CA	District Attorney		4	2	50.83%	17.24%	*	*	1	2			M
		Mayor	*	7	7	70.65%		*		1	2	*	*	M
		City Attorney	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
		District 5		4	2	50.40%	1.75%	*	*	1	2			M
		Public Defender	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
		Sheriff	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
		Treasurer	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		M
20 20	Be rk el ey, CA	Mayor	*	4	4	62.55%		*		1	2	*	*	R
		Council Dist 2		4	2	62.24%	6.58%	*	*	1	2			G
		Council Dist 3	*	3	3	69.25%		*		1	2	*	*	R
		Council Dist 5	*	3	3	76.55%		*		1	2	*	*	R
	Council Dist 6	*	2	2	72.35%		*		1	2	*		R	
	Council Dist 2		4	2	62.24%	14.95%	*	*	1	2			R	
	Council AL		3	2	52.37%	0.28%	*	*	1	2			A	
	Council Dist 1	*	3	3	53.51%		*		1	2	*	*	R	
	Council Dist 3		6	2	51.10%	0.70%	*	*	1	2			A	
	Council Dist 5	*	3	3	50.70%		*		1	2	*	*	R	
	Council Dist 7		5	2	60.10%	7.80%	*	*	1	2			A	
	City Attorney	*	2	2	80.01%		*		1	2	*		R	
	Sch Dist 1		3	2	62.50%	1.99%	*	*	1	2			B	
	Sch Dist 3		5	2	61.10%	5.50%	*	*	1	2			B	
Sch Dist 5		4	2	56.50%	5.54%	*	*	1	2			B		
Sch Dist 7		5	2	53.30%	10.50%	*	*	1	2			B		
Sa n Fr an cis co, CA	District 1		7	2	50.18%	16.50%	*	*	1	2			M	
	District 3	*	4	4	53.49%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
	District 5	*	4	4	51.52%		*		1	2	*	*	M	
	District 7	*	7	2	53.14%		19.56%	0	3	1		*	M	
	District 9	*	1		99.77%		*		1	2	*		M	
M ai ne	District 11		3	2	53.08%	10.00%	*	*	1	2			M	
	<i>Cong Rep Dist 2</i>	*					0	2	1				DD	
20 21	Sa nt	Mayor	*	3	3	54.85%		*		1	2	*	*	F

a Fe, N M	Council Pos 1	*	4	4	60.51%		*	1	2	*	*	E	
	Council Pos 2	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*		E	
	Council Pos 3	*	2	2	53.00%		*	1	2	*		E	
	Council Pos 4	*	2	2	75.00%		*	1	2	*		E	
St. Pa ul, M N	Mayor						*	1	2	*	*	LL	
	Mayor	*	8	8	61.85%								
Mi nn ea po lis, M N	Mayor		17	2	56.23%	12.69%	*	*	1	3	*	N	
	Council Ward 1		4	2	52.53%	4.39%	*	*	1	2		N	
	Council Ward 2		5	2	50.12%	15.05%	*	*	1	2		N	
	Council Ward 3		4	2	54.97%	5.90%	*	*	1	2		N	
	Council Ward 4	*	3	3	60.80%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Council Ward 5		7	2	51.12%	24.50%	*	*	1	2			N
	Council Ward 6	*	2	2	60.13%		*		1	2	*		N
	Council Ward 7	*	4	4	62.22%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Council Ward 8	*	2	2	85.99%		*		1	2	*		N
	Council Ward 9	*	8	8	56.94%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Council Ward 10		6	2	59.95%	16.12%	*	*	1	3		*	N
	Council Ward 11	*	5	5	58.42%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Council Ward 12	*	3	3	65.04%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Council Ward 13	*	5	5	66.25%		*		1	2	*	*	N
	Be rk el ey, CA	Park Board Dist 1	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*		N
		Park Board Dist 2		3	2	56.07%	12.90%	*	*	1	2		N
Park Board Dist 3		*	3	3	59.50%		*		1	2	*	*	N
Park Board Dist 4		*	2	2	61.50%		*		1	2	*		N
Park Board Dist 5		*	3	3	60.60%		*		1	2	*	*	N
Park Board Dist 6		*	4	2	58.56%	19.08%		0	2	3		*	N
20 22 Oa kla nd , CA	Council Dist 1		3	2	52.91%	9.55%	*	*	1	2		S	
	Council Dist 4	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	S	
	Council Dist 7	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	S	
	Council Dist 8		5	2	68.05%	16.43%	*	*	1	2		T	
	City Auditor	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	S	
	Mayor	*	10	2	50.30%	14.82%		0	2	1		U	
	Council Dist 2	*	2	2	67.79%		*		1	2	*	S	
	Council Dist 4	*	2	2	68.47%		*		1	2	*	S	
	Council Dist 6	*	4	4	71.26%		*		1	2	*	*	S
	City Auditor	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*		S
School Dist 2	*	3	3	50.01%		*		1	2	*	*	S	
School Dist 4	*	3	2	50.52%	20.65%		0	2	1		V		
School Dist 6		3	2	54.23%	17.46%	*	*	1	2		W		

San Francisco, CA	Assessor	*	1		100.00%		*	1	2	*		M
	District Attorney		3	2	53.68%	13.95%	*	*	1	2		M
	Public Defender	*	2	2	72.11%		*		1	2	*	M
	District 2	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	M
	District 4	*	2	2	50.86%		*		1	2	*	M
	District 6		3	2	53.10%	13.77%	*	*	1	2		M
	District 8	*	2	2	77.54%		*		1	2	*	M
	District 10	*	2	2	72.85%		*		1	2	*	M
	Council Dist 1		3	2	55.78%	14.58%	*	*	1	2		Y
	Council Dist 3	*	1		100.00%		*		1	2	*	S
Council Dist 5	*	2	2	50.09%		*		1	2	*	S	
Mayor	*						0	2	1		X	
Alaska	Senator		4	2	50.74%	13.56%						
	House Rep		4	2	53.70%	4.85%	*	*	1	2		AA
	Governor	*	4	4	54.96%	6.40%	*	*	1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist A	*	2	2	50.29%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist B	*	1		95.83%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist C	*	3	3	56.29%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist D		3	2	53.56%	12.55%	*	*	1	2		AA
	Senate Dist E		3	2	56.98%	20.69%	*	*	1	2		AA
	Senate Dist F	*	2	2	54.51%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist G	*	2	2	56.48%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist H	*	2	2	51.80%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist I	*	2	2	66.42%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist J	*	3	3	50.03%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist K	*	2	2	58.00%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist L	*	2	2	57.89%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist M	*	2	2	75.80%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist N		3	2	58.69%	24.25%	*	*	1	2		AA
	Senate Dist O	*	2	2	51.80%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist P	*	3	3	51.14%		*		1	2	*	BB
	Senate Dist Q	*	3	3	62.57%		*		1	2	*	BB
Senate Dist R	*	3	3	56.74%		*		1	2	*	BB	
Senate Dist S	*	2	2	64.72%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 1	*	2	2	52.44%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 2	*	2	2	58.31%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 3	*	1		95.45%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 4	*	2	2	79.14%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 5	*	2	2	60.94%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 6	*	3	3	52.12%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 7	*	2	2	52.60%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 8	*	1		96.60%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 9	*	2	2	54.17%		*		1	2	*	BB	
House Dist 10	*	3	3	51.52%		*		1	2	*	BB	

		<i>House Dist 11</i>	*	3	2	50.77%	11.58%	0	2	1			AA
		House Dist 12	*	2	2	58.98%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 13	*	2	2	52.48%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 14	*	2	2	66.90%		*	1	2	*		BB
		<i>House Dist 15</i>	*	3	2	50.06%	7.42%	0	2	1			AA
		House Dist 16	*	2	2	55.08%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 17	*	2	2	55.73%		*	1	2	*		BB
		<i>House Dist 18</i>	*	3	2	51.91%	12.36%	0	2	1			AA
		House Dist 19	*	2	2	74.07%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 20	*	4	4	54.27%		*	1	2	*	*	BB
		House Dist 21	*	2	2	50.96%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 22	*	2	2	50.77%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 23	*	2	2	61.53%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 24	*	3	3	52.62%		*	1	2	*	*	BB
		House Dist 25	*	2	2	77.80%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 26	*	2	2	80.81%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 27	*	3	3	51.33%		*	1	2	*	*	BB
		House Dist 28		4	2	61.71%	28.77%	*	*	1	2		AA
		House Dist 29	*	2	2	74.15%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 30		3	2	55.94%	19.53%	*	*	1	2		AA
		House Dist 31		3	2	55.52%	12.51%	*	*	1	2		AA
		House Dist 32	*	3	3	51.53%		*	1	2	*	*	BB
		House Dist 33	*	2	2	97.51%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 34		3	2	55.64%	6.24%	*	*	1	2		AA
		House Dist 35	*	4	4	53.50%		*	1	2	*	*	BB
		House Dist 36	*	2	2	65.37%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 37	*	2	2	96.81%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 38	*	1		85.17%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 39	*	2	2	50.95%		*	1	2	*		BB
		House Dist 40	*	1		97.76%		*	1	2	*		BB
	M ai ne	Cong Rep Dist 2						*	*	1	2		DD
				3	2	53.05%	3.56%						
	Sa nt a Fe, N M	Council Pos 1		4	2	52.36%	8.33%	*	*	1	2		C
		Council Pos 2	*	2	2	54.00%		*		1	2	*	C
		Council Pos 3	*	2	2	56.00%		*		1	2	*	C
		Council Pos 4	*	2	2	69.00%		*		1	2	*	C
20 23	St. Pa ul, M N	Council Ward 1		8	2	42.56%	18.03%	*	*	1	2		NN
		Council Ward 2	*	4	4	63.80%		*		1	2	*	HH
		Council Ward 3		4	2	60.56%	17.14%	*	*	1	2		OO
		Council Ward 4	*	2	2	80.82%		*		1	2	*	HH
		Council Ward 5	*	4	4	52.22%		*		1	2	*	HH
		Council Ward 6	*	2	2	61.91%		*		1	2	*	HH
		Council Ward 7		6	2	51.75%	12.89%	*	*	1	2		M M

{INSERT GRAPHIC HERE}

Sources:

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