**ELECTION '00:
TAKE TWO**

The Rhodes Cook Letter

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The 2000 Presidential Election

Where This Presidential Election Fits In

By Rhodes Cook

In just about every respect, the presidential election of 2000 made history.

It marked only the fourth time that the winner of the electoral vote did not also win the popular vote.

The popular vote totals for Al Gore (50.996 million) and George W. Bush (50.456 million) were the second and third-highest ever.

Meanwhile, Gore's edge of nearly 540,000 votes constituted the third-smallest margin in the popular vote tally since 1900.

George W. Bush's win by five electoral votes was the second-smallest ever in the Electoral College.

And the 105.4 million votes counted in the presidential election (pregnant and dangling chads aside) was an all-time high, although the total represented only 51.2% of the nation's voting-age population (of 205.8 million), the fourth-lowest turnout rate, according to the Census Bureau, since 1932.

Third parties continued to influence presidential politics, as for the third straight election, the winner failed to attain a majority of the popular vote.

That result, however, is not unusual. Fully 40% of all presidential elections since the early 19th century have produced "minority" winners, among them the most famous presidents in the nation's history:

Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland (twice), Woodrow Wilson (twice),

Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Richard M. Nixon, and Bill Clinton (twice).

But while they often tend to have a limited mandate, these sub-50% winners have usually come out of their election buoyed by at least one of three factors: 1) a clear-cut edge in the popular

MOST POPULAR VOTES

(Over 40 Million)

Rank	Candidate	Party	Election	Vote	Outcome
1	Ronald Reagan*	Rep.	1984	54,455,075	Won
2	Al Gore	Dem.	2000	50,996,064	Lost
3	George W. Bush	Rep.	2000	50,456,169	Won
4	George Bush	Rep.	1988	48,886,097	Won
5	Bill Clinton*	Dem.	1996	47,402,357	Won
6	Richard M. Nixon*	Rep.	1972	47,169,911	Won
7	Bill Clinton	Dem.	1992	44,909,326	Won
8	Ronald Reagan	Rep.	1980	43,904,153	Won
9	Lyndon B. Johnson*	Dem.	1964	43,129,566	Won
10	Michael S. Dukakis	Dem.	1988	41,809,074	Lost
11	Jimmy Carter	Dem.	1976	40,830,763	Won

** indicates incumbent*

vote; 2) a decisive advantage in the electoral vote; and 3) party allies firmly in command on Capitol Hill. None of these assets undergirds the new Republican executive as the second Bush presidency gets underway.

Historical data in the lists below are from *Guide to U.S. Elections* and *America at the Polls*, both published by Congressional Quarterly. An asterisk (*) indicates an incumbent president.

CLOSEST ELECTIONS IN POPULAR VOTE SINCE 1900

(In Raw Vote)

Rank	Winner	Party	Election	Margin in Popular Votes
1	John F. Kennedy	Dem.	1960	Won by 118,574 over Nixon (R)
2	Richard M. Nixon	Rep.	1968	Won by 510,314 over Humphrey (D)
3	George W. Bush	Rep.	2000	Lost by 539,895 to Gore (D)
4	Woodrow Wilson*	Dem.	1916	Won by 579,511 over Hughes (R)
5	William McKinley*	Rep.	1900	Won by 859,694 over Bryan (D)

CLOSEST ELECTIONS IN POPULAR VOTE SINCE 1824

(In Percentage Points)

Rank	Winner	Party	Election	Margin in Percentage Points
1	James A. Garfield	Rep.	1880	Won by 0.02% over Hancock (D)
2	John F. Kennedy	Dem.	1960	Won by 0.2% over Nixon (R)
3	Grover Cleveland	Dem.	1884	Won by 0.3% over Blaine (R)
4	George W. Bush	Rep.	2000	Lost by 0.5% to Gore (D)
5	Richard M. Nixon	Rep.	1968	Won by 0.7% over Humphrey (D)
6	Benjamin Harrison	Rep.	1888	Lost by 0.8% to Cleveland (D)

NARROWEST ELECTORAL VOTE VICTORIES SINCE 1800

This chart does not include the presidential elections of 1800 and 1824, which were decided in the House of Representatives.

Rank	Winner	Party	Election	Margin in Electoral Votes
1	Rutherford B. Hayes	Rep.	1876	Won by 1 over Tilden (D)
2	George W. Bush	Rep.	2000	Won by 5 over Gore (D)
3	Woodrow Wilson*	Dem.	1916	Won by 23 over Hughes (R)
4	Zachary Taylor	Whig	1848	Won by 36 over Cass (D)
5	Grover Cleveland	Dem.	1884	Won by 37 over Blaine (R)
6	James Madison*	Dem.-Rep.	1812	Won by 39 over D. Clinton (Federalist and independent Dem.-Rep.)

Note: In the 2000 election, George W. Bush won 271 electoral votes, while Al Gore won 267. However, a Gore elector in the District of Columbia left her ballot blank, reducing Gore's total to 266.

'MINORITY' PRESIDENTS

'Minority' presidents are those elected with less than 50% of the total popular vote. Of the 45 presidential elections conducted by popular vote since 1824, 18 have produced a 'minority' president.

Rank	Winner	Party	Election	Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
1	John Q. Adams	Dem.-Rep.	1824	30.9%	32.2% (Elected by House)
2	Abraham Lincoln	Rep.	1860	39.8%	59.4%
3	Woodrow Wilson	Dem.	1912	41.8%	81.9%
4	Bill Clinton	Dem.	1992	43.0%	68.8%
5	Richard M. Nixon	Rep.	1968	43.4%	55.9%
6	James Buchanan	Dem.	1856	45.3%	58.8%
7	Grover Cleveland	Dem.	1892	46.1%	62.4%
8	Zachary Taylor	Whig	1848	47.3%	56.2%
9	Benjamin Harrison	Rep.	1888	47.8%	58.1%
10	George W. Bush	Rep.	2000	47.9%	50.4%
11	Rutherford B. Hayes	Rep.	1876	48.0%	50.1%
12	James A. Garfield	Rep.	1880	48.3%	58.0%
13	Grover Cleveland	Dem.	1884	48.5%	54.6%
14	Woodrow Wilson*	Dem.	1916	49.2%	52.2%
	Bill Clinton*	Dem.	1996	49.2%	70.4%
16	James K. Polk	Dem.	1844	49.5%	61.8%
17	Harry S. Truman*	Dem.	1948	49.6%	57.1%
18	John F. Kennedy	Dem.	1960	49.7%	56.4%

MOST POPULAR VOTES FOR THIRD-PARTY/INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

Rank	Candidate	Party	Election	Votes
1	Ross Perot	<i>Independent</i>	1992	19,741,657
2	George C. Wallace	American Independent	1968	9,906,473
3	Ross Perot	Reform	1996	8,085,402
4	John B. Anderson	<i>Independent</i>	1980	5,720,060
5	Robert M. La Follette	Progressive	1924	4,832,532
6	Theodore Roosevelt	Progressive	1912	4,119,207
7	Ralph Nader	Green	2000	2,882,708

HIGHEST VOTER TURNOUTS

(In terms of votes counted for president)

Rank	Election	Candidates	Turnout
1	2000	G.W. BUSH (R) - Gore (D)	105,402,138
2	1992	CLINTON (D) - Bush (R)*	104,425,014
3	1996	CLINTON (D)* - Dole (R)	96,277,872
4	1984	REAGAN (R)* - Mondale (D)	92,652,842
5	1988	BUSH (R) - Dukakis (D)	91,594,809

LOWEST TURNOUT RATES SINCE 1932

(In terms of voting age population)

Rank	Election	Candidates	Turnout Rate
1	1996	CLINTON (D)* - Dole (R)	48.9%
2	1988	BUSH (R) - Dukakis (D)	50.3%
3	1948	TRUMAN (D)* - Dewey (R)	51.1%
4	2000	G.W. BUSH (R) - Gore (D)	51.2%
5	1932	F.D. ROOSEVELT (D) - Hoover (R)*	52.5%

Note: In the two turnout charts above, the names of the winners are in capital letters.

The 2000 Presidential Election By Strength of Support

THE NADER FACTOR: OVERRATED?

In any election as close as the presidential contest of 2000, the losers do not have to look far for scapegoats. And one of the most prominent for Democratic loyalists has been Ralph Nader, the Green Party nominee and recipient of nearly 3 million votes nationwide.

But in looking at the official state-by-state tally, it is arguable that Reform Party candidate Patrick J. Buchanan cost George W. Bush as many electoral votes as Nader cost Gore.

Exhibit AAA for the Democrats is Florida (with 25 electoral votes), where Nader drew nearly 100,000 votes in a state that Gore ultimately lost by barely 500. And in New Hampshire (4 electoral votes), Nader's vote was more than triple the size of Gore's deficit.

But that was it for the Nader threat. In other states, Gore either prevailed or lost by a margin wider than the size of the Nader vote.

On the other hand, there were four states won narrowly by Gore, where the vote for Buchanan exceeded Gore's margin of victory. At the top of the list were Wisconsin (11 electoral votes) and New Mexico (5 electoral votes), where Buchanan's vote was more than twice the size of Bush's deficit. The two other states where Buchanan clearly hurt Bush were Iowa and Oregon (7 electoral votes apiece).

Taken together, then, there were 30 additional electoral votes that Bush may have won if Buchanan had not been in the race, compared to 29 more electoral votes that may have gone to Gore if Nader had not run. In short, the effect of the two third-party candidates on the electoral vote was essentially a wash.

States where the Nader vote exceeded Bush's margin of victory:

State	Electoral Vote	Nader Vote	Bush Margin
Florida	25	97,488	537
New Hampshire	4	22,188	7,211

States where the Buchanan vote exceeded Gore's margin of victory:

State	Electoral Vote	Buchanan Vote	Gore Margin
Iowa	7	5,731	4,144
New Mexico	5	1,392	366
Oregon	7	7,063	6,765
Wisconsin	11	11,446	5,708

The 2000 Presidential Election

The Nationwide Popular Vote

George W. Bush may have won the presidency, but Al Gore won the popular vote by a larger margin than any candidate who has not been elected president. Whether that wins Gore the political equivalent of “Miss Congeniality,” or a much bigger prize in a future election, remains to be seen.

But two of the three previous candidates to win the popular, but not the electoral, vote came back four years later to win the White House, Andrew Jackson (in 1828) and Grover Cleveland (in 1892). Meanwhile, none of the three presidents elected without a popular vote plurality – John Quincy Adams in 1824, Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, and Benjamin Harrison in 1888 – won a second term.

Following is the “Ivory Soap” edition of the 2000 popular vote. The totals below are based on official returns from the Web sites of state election boards. But almost invariably small changes in the totals could occur in a state or two before publication this spring in *America Votes*, a biennial compilation of nationwide election data from CQ Press.

As it was, Gore more than doubled his lead in the popular vote from the end of election week to late December when results from all the states had been certified. On Nov. 10 – three days after the election – Gore led Bush by barely 200,000 votes in the popular count. At the end, his lead approached 540,000 votes, swelled in large part by a flurry of ballots from the Pacific Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington that he ended up sweeping.

The chart below lists presidential and vice-presidential nominees for all parties that received at least 10,000 votes in the 2000 presidential election. The parties are listed in order of their vote. The home state of the nominees are indicated in parentheses.

Party	President	Vice President	Popular Vote	%	Best State	%
Democratic	Al Gore (Tenn.)	Joseph I. Lieberman (Conn.)	50,996,064	48.38%	Rhode Island	61.04%
Republican	George W. Bush (Texas)	Richard B. Cheney (Wyo.)	50,456,169	47.87%	Wyoming	67.76%
Green	Ralph Nader (Conn.)	Winona LaDuke (Minn.)	2,882,708	2.73%	Alaska	10.07%
Reform	Patrick J. Buchanan (Va.)	Ezola Foster (Calif.)	448,847	0.43%	North Dakota	2.53%
Libertarian	Harry Browne (Tenn.)	Art Olivier (Calif.)	386,024	0.37%	Georgia	1.40%
Constitution	Howard Phillips (Va.)	J. Curtis Frazier (Mo.)	98,000	0.09%	Connecticut	0.66%
Natural Law	John Hagelin (Iowa)	Nat Goldhaber (Calif.)	83,520	0.08%	New York	0.36%
Others	-	-	50,806	0.05%	-	-
TOTAL VOTE			105,402,138			
Gore Plurality			539,895			

Note: The Gore-Lieberman ticket received 85.16% of the vote in the District of Columbia, although Rhode Island was the best state for the Democratic ticket percentagewise. The vote for “Others” includes the following totals for candidates that were on the ballot in at least one state: David McReynolds (Socialist) 7,716; James Harris (Socialist Workers) 7,378; L. Neil Smith (Libertarian candidate in Arizona) 5,775; Monica Moorehead (Workers World) 4,795; Cathy Gordon Brown (Independent) 1,606; Denny Lane (Vermont Grassroots) 1,044; Randall Venson (Independent) 535; Earl F. Dodge (Prohibition) 208; Louie G. Youngkeit (Unaffiliated) 161; “None of These Candidates” 3,315; and miscellaneous write-ins, 18,273.

2000 OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, part 1

	Total Vote	Bush (R)	Gore (D)	Nader (G)	Others	Rep.-Dem.	Percentage of Vote			
						Plurality	Bush (R)	Gore (D)	Nader (G)	Others
NORTHEAST										
Connecticut	1,459,525	561,094	816,015	64,452	17,964	254,921 D	38.44%	55.91%	4.42%	1.23%
Delaware	327,529	137,288	180,068	8,307	1,866	42,780 D	41.92%	54.98%	2.54%	0.57%
Maine	651,817	286,616	319,951	37,127	8,123	33,335 D	43.97%	49.09%	5.70%	1.25%
Maryland	2,023,735	813,827	1,144,008	53,768	12,132	330,181 D	40.21%	56.53%	2.66%	0.60%
Massachusetts	2,702,984	878,502	1,616,487	173,564	34,431	737,985 D	32.50%	59.80%	6.42%	1.27%
New Hampshire	567,795	273,559	266,348	22,188	5,700	7,211 R	48.18%	46.91%	3.91%	1.00%
New Jersey	3,187,226	1,284,173	1,788,850	94,554	19,649	504,677 D	40.29%	56.13%	2.97%	0.62%
New York	6,821,997	2,403,374	4,107,697	244,030	66,896	1,704,323 D	35.23%	60.21%	3.58%	0.98%
Pennsylvania	4,912,185	2,281,127	2,485,967	103,392	41,699	204,840 D	46.44%	50.61%	2.10%	0.85%
Rhode Island	408,783	130,555	249,508	25,052	3,668	118,953 D	31.94%	61.04%	6.13%	0.90%
Vermont	294,308	119,775	149,022	20,374	5,137	29,247 D	40.70%	50.63%	6.92%	1.75%
West Virginia	648,124	336,475	295,497	10,680	5,472	40,978 R	51.92%	45.59%	1.65%	0.84%
District of Columbia	201,894	18,073	171,923	10,576	1,322	153,850 D	8.95%	85.16%	5.24%	0.65%
Northeast Total	24,207,902	9,524,438	13,591,341	868,064	224,059	4,066,903 D	39.34%	56.14%	3.59%	0.93%
MIDWEST										
Illinois	4,742,115	2,019,421	2,589,026	103,759	29,909	569,605 D	42.58%	54.60%	2.19%	0.63%
Indiana	2,199,305	1,245,836	901,980	18,506	32,983	343,856 R	56.65%	41.01%	0.84%	1.50%
Iowa	1,315,563	634,373	638,517	29,374	13,299	4,144 D	48.22%	48.54%	2.23%	1.01%
Kansas	1,072,216	622,332	399,276	36,086	14,522	223,056 R	58.04%	37.24%	3.37%	1.35%
Michigan	4,232,501	1,953,139	2,170,418	84,165	24,779	217,279 D	46.15%	51.28%	1.99%	0.59%
Minnesota	2,438,685	1,109,659	1,168,266	126,696	34,064	58,607 D	45.50%	47.91%	5.20%	1.40%
Missouri	2,359,892	1,189,924	1,111,138	38,515	20,315	78,786 R	50.42%	47.08%	1.63%	0.86%
Nebraska	697,019	433,862	231,780	24,540	6,837	202,082 R	62.25%	33.25%	3.52%	0.98%
North Dakota	288,256	174,852	95,284	9,486	8,634	79,568 R	60.66%	33.06%	3.29%	3.00%
Ohio	4,701,998	2,350,363	2,183,628	117,799	50,208	166,735 R	49.99%	46.44%	2.51%	1.07%
South Dakota	316,269	190,700	118,804	-	6,765	71,896 R	60.30%	37.56%	-	2.14%
Wisconsin	2,598,607	1,237,279	1,242,987	94,070	24,271	5,708 D	47.61%	47.83%	3.62%	0.93%
Midwest Total	26,962,426	13,161,740	12,851,104	682,996	266,586	310,636 R	48.82%	47.66%	2.53%	0.99%
SOUTH										
Alabama	1,666,272	941,173	692,611	18,323	14,165	248,562 R	56.48%	41.57%	1.10%	0.85%
Arkansas	921,781	472,940	422,768	13,421	12,652	50,172 R	51.31%	45.86%	1.46%	1.37%
Florida	5,963,110	2,912,790	2,912,253	97,488	40,579	537 R	48.85%	48.84%	1.63%	0.68%
Georgia	2,596,645	1,419,720	1,116,230	13,273	47,422	303,490 R	54.68%	42.99%	0.51%	1.83%
Kentucky	1,544,026	872,520	638,923	23,118	9,465	233,597 R	56.51%	41.38%	1.50%	0.61%
Louisiana	1,765,656	927,871	792,344	20,473	24,968	135,527 R	52.55%	44.88%	1.16%	1.41%
Mississippi	994,184	572,844	404,614	8,122	8,604	168,230 R	57.62%	40.70%	0.82%	0.87%
North Carolina	2,914,990	1,631,163	1,257,692	-	26,135	373,471 R	55.96%	43.15%	-	0.90%
Oklahoma	1,234,229	744,337	474,276	-	15,616	270,061 R	60.31%	38.43%	-	1.27%
South Carolina	1,384,253	786,892	566,039	20,279	11,043	220,853 R	56.85%	40.89%	1.46%	0.80%
Tennessee	2,076,181	1,061,949	981,720	19,781	12,731	80,229 R	51.15%	47.28%	0.95%	0.61%
Texas	6,407,637	3,799,639	2,433,746	137,994	36,258	1,365,893 R	59.30%	37.98%	2.15%	0.57%
Virginia	2,739,447	1,437,490	1,217,290	59,398	25,269	220,200 R	52.47%	44.44%	2.17%	0.92%
South Total	32,208,411	17,581,328	13,910,506	431,670	284,907	3,670,822 R	54.59%	43.19%	1.34%	0.88%
WEST										
Alaska	285,560	167,398	79,004	28,747	10,411	88,394 R	58.62%	27.67%	10.07%	3.65%
Arizona	1,532,016	781,652	685,341	45,645	19,378	96,311 R	51.02%	44.73%	2.98%	1.26%
California	10,965,822	4,567,429	5,861,203	418,707	118,483	1,293,774 D	41.65%	53.45%	3.82%	1.08%
Colorado	1,741,368	883,748	738,227	91,434	27,959	145,521 R	50.75%	42.39%	5.25%	1.61%
Hawaii	367,951	137,845	205,286	21,623	3,197	67,441 D	37.46%	55.79%	5.88%	0.87%
Idaho	501,615	336,937	138,637	12,292	13,749	198,300 R	67.17%	27.64%	2.45%	2.74%
Montana	410,986	240,178	137,126	24,437	9,245	103,052 R	58.44%	33.37%	5.95%	2.25%
Nevada	608,970	301,575	279,978	15,008	12,409	21,597 R	49.52%	45.98%	2.46%	2.04%
New Mexico	598,605	286,417	286,783	21,251	4,154	366 D	47.85%	47.91%	3.55%	0.69%
Oregon	1,533,968	713,577	720,342	77,357	22,692	6,765 D	46.52%	46.96%	5.04%	1.48%
Utah	770,754	515,096	203,053	35,850	16,755	312,043 R	66.83%	26.34%	4.65%	2.17%
Washington	2,487,433	1,108,864	1,247,652	103,002	27,915	138,788 D	44.58%	50.16%	4.14%	1.12%
Wyoming	218,351	147,947	60,481	4,625	5,298	87,466 R	67.76%	27.70%	2.12%	2.43%
West Total	22,023,399	10,188,663	10,643,113	899,978	291,645	454,450 D	46.26%	48.33%	4.09%	1.32%
NATIONAL	105,402,138	50,456,169	50,996,064	2,882,708	1,067,197	539,895 D	47.87%	48.38%	2.73%	1.01%

Note: Votes for Nader in Ga., Idaho, Ind. and Wyo. were write-ins, as were those for Buchanan in Mich., Phillips in Ariz., Ga., Ill., Ind., Texas and W.V., and Hagelin in Conn., Ind. and Md. A dash (-) indicates candidate was not on the ballot and did not receive any write-in votes.

2000 OFFICIAL PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, part 2

	Buchanan (Reform)	Browne (Libertarian)	Phillips (Constitution)	Hagelin (Natural Law)	Buchanan (Reform)	Browne (Libertarian)	Phillips (Constitution)	Hagelin (Natural Law)
NORTHEAST								
Connecticut	4,731	3,484	9,695	40	0.32%	0.24%	0.66%	0.00%
Delaware	777	774	208	107	0.24%	0.24%	0.06%	0.03%
Maine	4,443	3,074	579	-	0.68%	0.47%	0.09%	-
Maryland	4,248	5,310	918	161	0.21%	0.26%	0.05%	0.01%
Massachusetts	11,149	16,366	-	2,884	0.41%	0.61%	-	0.11%
New Hampshire	2,615	2,757	328	-	0.46%	0.49%	0.06%	-
New Jersey	6,989	6,312	1,409	2,215	0.22%	0.20%	0.04%	0.07%
New York	31,599	7,649	1,498	24,361	0.46%	0.11%	0.02%	0.36%
Pennsylvania	16,023	11,248	14,428	-	0.33%	0.23%	0.29%	-
Rhode Island	2,273	742	97	271	0.56%	0.18%	0.02%	0.07%
Vermont	2,192	784	153	219	0.74%	0.27%	0.05%	0.07%
West Virginia	3,169	1,912	23	367	0.49%	0.30%	0.00%	0.06%
District of Columbia	-	669	-	-	-	0.33%	-	-
Northeast Total	90,208	61,081	29,336	30,625	0.37%	0.25%	0.12%	0.13%
MIDWEST								
Illinois	16,106	11,623	49	2,127	0.34%	0.25%	0.00%	0.04%
Indiana	16,959	15,530	197	198	0.77%	0.71%	0.01%	0.01%
Iowa	5,731	3,209	613	2,281	0.44%	0.24%	0.05%	0.17%
Kansas	7,370	4,525	1,254	1,373	0.69%	0.42%	0.12%	0.13%
Michigan	1,851	16,711	3,791	2,426	0.04%	0.39%	0.09%	0.06%
Minnesota	22,166	5,282	3,272	2,294	0.91%	0.22%	0.13%	0.09%
Missouri	9,818	7,436	1,957	1,104	0.42%	0.32%	0.08%	0.05%
Nebraska	3,646	2,245	468	478	0.52%	0.32%	0.07%	0.07%
North Dakota	7,288	660	373	313	2.53%	0.23%	0.13%	0.11%
Ohio	26,721	13,473	3,823	6,181	0.57%	0.29%	0.08%	0.13%
South Dakota	3,322	1,662	1,781	-	1.05%	0.53%	0.56%	-
Wisconsin	11,446	6,640	2,042	878	0.44%	0.26%	0.08%	0.03%
Midwest Total	132,424	88,996	19,620	19,653	0.49%	0.33%	0.07%	0.07%
SOUTH								
Alabama	6,351	5,893	775	447	0.38%	0.35%	0.05%	0.03%
Arkansas	7,358	2,781	1,415	1,098	0.80%	0.30%	0.15%	0.12%
Florida	17,484	16,415	1,371	2,281	0.29%	0.28%	0.02%	0.04%
Georgia	10,926	36,332	140	-	0.42%	1.40%	0.01%	-
Kentucky	4,152	2,885	915	1,513	0.27%	0.19%	0.06%	0.10%
Louisiana	14,356	2,951	5,483	1,075	0.81%	0.17%	0.31%	0.06%
Mississippi	2,265	2,009	3,267	450	0.23%	0.20%	0.33%	0.05%
North Carolina	8,874	13,891	-	-	0.30%	0.48%	-	-
Oklahoma	9,014	6,602	-	-	0.73%	0.53%	-	-
South Carolina	3,520	4,898	1,682	943	0.25%	0.35%	0.12%	0.07%
Tennessee	4,250	4,284	1,015	613	0.20%	0.21%	0.05%	0.03%
Texas	12,394	23,160	567	-	0.19%	0.36%	0.01%	-
Virginia	5,455	15,198	1,809	-	0.20%	0.55%	0.07%	-
South Total	106,399	137,299	18,439	8,420	0.33%	0.43%	0.06%	0.03%
WEST								
Alaska	5,192	2,636	596	919	1.82%	0.92%	0.21%	0.32%
Arizona	12,373	-	110	1,120	0.81%	-	0.01%	0.07%
California	44,987	45,520	17,042	10,934	0.41%	0.42%	0.16%	0.10%
Colorado	10,465	12,799	1,319	2,240	0.60%	0.73%	0.08%	0.13%
Hawaii	1,071	1,477	343	306	0.29%	0.40%	0.09%	0.08%
Idaho	7,615	3,488	1,469	1,177	1.52%	0.70%	0.29%	0.23%
Montana	5,697	1,718	1,155	675	1.39%	0.42%	0.28%	0.16%
Nevada	4,747	3,311	621	415	0.78%	0.54%	0.10%	0.07%
New Mexico	1,392	2,058	343	361	0.23%	0.34%	0.06%	0.06%
Oregon	7,063	7,447	2,189	2,574	0.46%	0.49%	0.14%	0.17%
Utah	9,319	3,616	2,709	763	1.21%	0.47%	0.35%	0.10%
Washington	7,171	13,135	1,989	2,927	0.29%	0.53%	0.08%	0.12%
Wyoming	2,724	1,443	720	411	1.25%	0.66%	0.33%	0.19%
West Total	119,816	98,648	30,605	24,822	0.54%	0.45%	0.14%	0.11%
NATIONAL	448,847	386,024	98,000	83,520	0.43%	0.37%	0.09%	0.08%

Note: Votes for Nader in Ga., Idaho, Ind. and Wyo. were write-ins, as were those for Buchanan in Mich., Phillips in Ariz., Ga., Ill., Ind., Texas and W.V., and Hagelin in Conn., Ind. and Md. A dash (-) indicates candidate was not on the ballot and did not receive any write-in votes.

STALEMATE:

The 'Great' Election of 2000

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This piece has been updated wherever appropriate.*

There have been a lot of words used to describe the election of 2000, but one rarely heard is the word “great.”

Yet roughly once every 30 years or so – appearing much like “Brigadoon” – there have been “great” elections that have defined the political landscape for the next generation. They have been watershed elections, like that of 1860 which first ushered the Republicans into national power; that of 1896 which cemented the ascendancy of urban over rural America; that of 1932 which launched the Democrats’ activist “New Deal;” and that of 1968, which formally saw the arrival of a Republican South.

Calendarwise, it is about time for another “great” election. Yet if this turns out to be one, it will be for a much different reason than those of the past. Rather than providing a sharp partisan redirection, this election will be remembered for the opposite reason, its very closeness – not just for president, but for the Senate and the House of Representatives as well. It is an election that may have propelled us into a political era unseen for more than a century, where neither party has more than a tenuous grip on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

But dramatic as it is, there has been a dispiriting tone thus far to this era. Nearly two centuries ago, there was a brief period in American history known as the “Era of Good Feelings,” largely because there was only one political party. What we have now is quite the opposite, an “Era of Ill Feelings” if you would, where razor-thin margins have heightened partisan anxiety and bitterness.

It is an era that did not arrive overnight. This is the third straight presidential election that has been won without a majority of the popular vote. And it is likely that when all the ballots are counted, this will also be the third straight election in which neither party has won a majority of the votes cast for the House of Representatives.

Whether this will be the state of national politics for the foreseeable future remains to be seen. The upcoming round of congressional redistricting could decisively tip the partisan balance in the House. The health of aging members of the Senate could have a pivotal impact on which party controls the nation’s upper chamber in the immediate future. And the recent candidacies of Ross Perot and Ralph Nader have shown the ability of third parties to dramatically affect the outcome of presidential elections.

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Close, Close, Close

But there is no doubt that the election of 2000 has become an instant classic because of its almost impossible-to-resolve closeness.

The popular vote for president is the closest since 1968, when Richard M. Nixon defeated Hubert H. Humphrey by a margin of barely 500,000 votes out of more than 73 million cast.

The electoral vote for president is the closest since 1876, when Rutherford B. Hayes defeated Samuel J. Tilden by a margin of just one electoral vote. This time, President-elect George W. Bush won by five votes, 271 to 266 (with one Democratic elector in the District of Columbia leaving her ballot blank rather than vote for Gore).

And Bush's Electoral College victory flies in the face of a popular vote win for Vice President Al Gore, the first time there were different popular and electoral vote winners in a presidential election since 1888.

The bizarre closeness of the results is equally evident at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. The Senate breakdown of 50-50 is the first partisan tie in the Senate since the election of 1880.

And the post-election House breakdown of 221-212 (with two independents) is the closest disparity in Republican and Democratic ranks since the election of 1952.

Why were the results so close?

At the presidential level, there were strongly conflicting tides that, at the end, virtually cancelled each other out. Gore was boosted by the nation's prosperity and high performance ratings for the Clinton administration, of which he was a part, factors borne out in presidential election models that were virtually unanimous in predicting a comfortable Gore victory.

Propelling Bush were Clinton's low personal ratings, a sentiment for change that often begins to work against the incumbent party at the eight-year mark, and a liberal third-party candidate in Ralph Nader, who posed a much greater problem for Gore than conservative Patrick J. Buchanan did for Bush.

The presidential race also pitted two conflicting political eras against each other – a short term Democratic period that twice elected Clinton in the 1990s, and a longer term Republican era that gave the GOP victory in five of the six previous presidential elections.

In the House, Democrats had been inching back to a position of near parity since their loss of congressional control in 1994. And much of the closeness in this year's House voting was due to the lack of competition, which kept partisan change to a minimum.

While 435 seats were at stake, the playing field was really barely one-tenth that size. Well-heeled incumbents and the lack of galvanizing issues or presidential coattails all proved to be powerful forces promoting the status quo and deterring significant competition in most districts.

The presidential race pitted two conflicting political eras against each other – a Democratic period that twice elected Clinton in the 1990s, and a Republican era that gave the GOP victory in five of the six previous presidential elections.

In short, barring an unexpected turn of events, neither party was going to win by much. And in the end, only 18 House seats changed party hands – 10 going to the Democrats, eight to the Republicans – for a net Democratic gain of two. Most of the switches came in the open seats, as only six incumbents were beaten, producing an incumbent re-election rate that approached 98%.

In the Senate, Republicans had more seats to defend (19, versus 15 Democratic), and that was reflected in the final results. The Democrats registered a net gain of four seats, picking off some of the more vulnerable members of the large GOP class of 1994 – Rod Grams of Minnesota, Spencer Abraham of Michigan and John Ashcroft of Missouri, who, in one of the more bizarre results of a bizarre election, lost to the state's late governor, Mel Carnahan.

Each party lost at least one veteran incumbent: the Democrats, Virginia's Charles S. Robb; the Republicans, Delaware's William V. Roth Jr. and Washington's Slade Gorton.

And the parties traded open seats: Democrats gained one in Florida; the Republicans picked up one in Nevada.

(Even with a 50-50 tie, though, Republicans are guaranteed control of the Senate after Jan. 20. Bush's vice president, Richard B. Cheney, will cast the chamber's tie-breaking vote.)

In the House, while 435 seats were at stake, the playing field was really barely one-tenth that size.

A Tale of Two Nations: Inside and Outside the "L"

When the chad from the ballots had finally settled, the national vote was razor-close but highly fractured.

Exit polls showed that men favored Bush, women favored Gore; whites preferred Bush, non-whites preferred Gore; the more affluent voted strongly for Bush, the less affluent heavily favored Gore; rural and small-town America went for Bush, urban America for Gore.

The geographical diversity of the presidential vote was colorfully evident in a map published in *USA Today* two days after the Nov. 7 election. Counties carried by Bush were colored in red. Those carried by Gore were colored in blue. And while Gore's counties were clustered in several parts of the country, the bulk of the map was a sea of red. On quick inspection, it was not difficult to design a cross-country trip from the outskirts of Washington, D.C., to the outskirts of Los Angeles without passing through a single county carried by Gore.

But a more intriguing aspect of the election was how it essentially divided the nation into distinct halves – a Republican-oriented "L-shaped" sector that includes the South, the Plains and the Mountain states plus Alaska; and a Democratic-oriented bicoastal-industrial heartland sector that includes the Northeast, the industrial Midwest and skips westward across the "L" to encompass the Pacific Coast states plus Hawaii.

The "L" is much more rural and geographically expansive, though it does include the heart of the fast-growing Sun Belt. The "L" comprises 26 states with 223 electoral votes. The bicoastal-industrial midland sector is more urban. It includes 24 states and the District of Columbia with 315 electoral votes.

This alignment has been in the making in presidential elections for several decades. From 1968 through 1988, Republicans frequently won the White House by dominating the "L" so conclusively that they were free to roam at will for votes in the Democrats' domain. But in the 1990s, Clinton

reversed the equation, showing such strong appeal in the bicoastal-industrial midlands that he was free to make forays into the “L,” ultimately making the Republican base look like a piece of Swiss cheese.

For many years, the disparity between the two sectors was merely a phenomenon of presidential elections, since Democrats dominated congressional voting across the country. That changed, though, in 1994, when the Republican tidal wave that swept the GOP into control on Capitol Hill came rolling out of the “L.”

In 1996, Republicans won the presidential and congressional voting within the “L” (albeit the former quite narrowly), while Democrats had the edge in presidential and congressional voting outside the “L” (with the advantage quite large in the balloting for the White House).

In this first election of the new millennium, each party essentially dug in and milked its base.

But it was the 2000 election that marked a full coming of age for this “tale of two nations.” The “L” was decisively Republican; the rest of the country decisively Democratic.

Giving Florida to Bush, the Texas governor swept all but one state in the “L” (narrowly losing New Mexico). Gore won 19 of 24 states in the bicoastal-industrial midlands.

Bush enjoyed a huge 218 to 5 electoral-vote lead in the Republican sector of the country. Gore posted a 262 to 53 advantage in the Democratic sector (including the electoral vote he won but did not receive in the District of Columbia).

Bush won the South, Plains states and Mountain West by a margin of 5.3 million in the popular vote. Gore won the Northeast, industrial Midwest and Pacific West by more than 5.8 million votes.

Republicans won 44 more House seats within the “L” than the Democrats (107 to 63, with one independent). Democrats won 35 more House seats than the Republicans in the rest of the country (149 to 114, with one independent). Democratic Rep. Julian C. Dixon of California died after the election, but his seat is expected to remain Democratic.

Republicans hold 18 more Senate seats than the Democrats (35 to 17) in the “L.” Elsewhere, Democrats hold 18 more Senate seats than the Republicans (33 to 15).

Add the two sectors together, and you get roughly a dead heat in balloting for the federal executive and legislative branches.

In this first election of the new millennium, each party essentially dug in and milked its base. For Republicans, the cornerstone of the “L” is the South, followed by the Mountain West.

The South – the 11 states of the old Confederacy plus Kentucky and Oklahoma – is now the epicenter of the national Republican Party, much like it was once for the Democrats. Bush carried the region by nearly 3.7 million votes on Nov. 7 and swept every state, including Gore’s home state of Tennessee and Clinton’s home state of Arkansas.

The GOP holds 26 more House seats across the South than the Democrats and eight more Senate seats. Many of the Republicans’ top leaders on Capitol Hill are from Dixie, including Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi and House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas.

While much smaller in population, the Mountain West is every bit as Republican as the South. Bush’s three top states percentage-wise were in the Rocky Mountain region – Wyoming (where he

drew 68% of the vote), and Idaho and Utah (each won by Bush with 67%) - and he outpolled Gore by roughly one million votes in the region as a whole.

At the congressional level, GOP hegemony in the Mountain states (including Alaska) is almost monolithic. Republicans hold 13 more House seats in this region than the Democrats and a dozen more Senate seats.

Meanwhile, the two basic building blocks of the Democrats' bicoastal-industrial midlands sector are roughly 2,500 miles apart - the states of the "Amtrak Corridor" and the Pacific West.

The "Amtrak Corridor" runs from Washington, D.C., to Boston, Mass., and encompasses eight states and the District of Columbia. Gore not only swept them all by a combined margin of four million votes, but the "Corridor" was also the site of his top three states nationally - Rhode Island (where he polled 61% of the vote), New York and Massachusetts (each won by Gore with 60%), plus the District of Columbia (which he won with 85%).

The "Corridor" has also been vital to Democrats at the congressional level, providing them with 18 more House seats and 10 more Senate seats than the Republicans, including the one in New York just won by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

At the congressional level, GOP hegemony in the Mountain states is almost monolithic.

Yet it was returns from the Pacific West late on Election Night that enabled Gore to pull ahead in the popular vote count and for the Democrats to pull closer to parity in the House. Gore swept the quartet of Pacific Coast states (California, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii) by 1.5 million votes, while the Democratic advantage in House seats in this part of the country grew to 20, with a gain of a half dozen seats in this election alone. In the Senate, the Democratic edge stands at six seats in the Pacific West.

The Ever-Changing Map

But even as closely divided as the nation was in this election, the political map is constantly evolving. Although socially conservative, West Virginia went for Bush - the first time since the New Deal that the state voted Republican for president other than in GOP landslide years. On the other hand, the presidential vote in Florida was nip and tuck, even though Republicans had carried the state in nine of the 12 previous elections since 1952, including the two in which Bush's father headed the GOP ticket.

There is no doubt that the election of 2000 was one of a kind. Whether it will be remembered as "great" will be for history to judge. The length of the current "Era of Ill Feelings," however, should be quicker to ascertain.

The original "Era of Good Feelings" was quickly followed by a brand of politics that was entirely different - a highly partisan era dominated by Andrew Jackson, whose encouragement of grass-roots participation made it a Democratic era with both a large and a small "d."

With Republicans winning the White House, in spite of a loss in the popular vote, they could hope that this is the start of a Republican era, with both a large and a small "r."

But if history does repeat itself, this "Era of Ill Feelings" will be followed by a period of less partisanship, with a more civil, bipartisan mode of governing. At this point, though, one can only hope that will happen.

NOT REALLY SO BAD

CLINTON'S LEGACY TO CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS

There is little doubt that Democrats lost ground politically during the Clinton presidency – in the Senate, the House, among the governors and in the state legislatures. But at least on Capitol Hill, their losses were pretty much par for the course.

The 2000 elections left the Democrats with 46 fewer House seats and seven fewer Senate seats than when Clinton was first elected in 1992. But every two-term presidency in the 20th century lost ground in the House, as did all but one in the Senate (the exception being the first eight years of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, when the Democrats picked up seven Senate seats).

House losses for the president's party have ranged from a low of 17 seats for the Republicans under Ronald Reagan in the 1980s to a high of 158 seats for the Democrats under Woodrow Wilson from 1912 to 1920. The Democrats also lost 14 Senate seats during Wilson's eight-year run, the most for the president's party in the last century.

In the chart below are the number of House and Senate seats held by the president's party at the beginning of his first term and at the end of his second. Numbers in bold type indicate that the president's party was in control of the legislative body in question. Clinton is the third two-term president in the last century to begin his administration with his party in control of both the House and Senate, but end up with control of neither. The other two presidents were Wilson and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Seats held by the President's Party

President	Party	Elections	House			Senate			Outcome for President's Party in Presidential Election at the 8-year mark
			Start	End	Change	Start	End	Change	
Bill Clinton	Dems.	1992-2000	258	212	-46	57	50	-7	Won Popular Vote, but lost Electoral Vote
Ronald Reagan	Reps.	1980-1988	192	175	-17	53	45	-8	Won
R. Nixon/G. Ford	Reps.	1968-1976	192	143	-49	42	38	-4	Lost
J. Kennedy/L. Johnson	Dems.	1960-1968	263	243	-20	64	58	-6	Lost
Dwight D. Eisenhower	Reps.	1952-1960	221	174	-47	48	36	-12	Lost
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Dems.	1932-1940	313	267	-46	59	66	+7	Won
W. Harding/C. Coolidge	Reps.	1920-1928	300	267	-33	59	56	-3	Won
Woodrow Wilson	Dems.	1912-1920	290	132	-158	51	37	-14	Lost

Source for pre-2000 House and Senate totals: Congressional Quarterly's *Guide to U.S. Elections*.

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