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Boundaries That Matter: Redistricting Congressional Election Districts

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Boundaries That Matter: Redistricting Congressional Election Districts

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After every decennial census in the U.S. politicians are very interested in maps.



The Importance of Election Boundaries

When the Lines are Drawn with One Party in Control

<http://bit.ly/reagan-on-redistricting>



Congressional Redistricting in Ohio

Who Decides?

- **In Ohio – the state legislature**
 - every 10 years after the census
- Population of each district must be as close to the average in each state as “reasonably possible”. (therefore equal populations within a state)
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 – minority representation
- There are no other requirements.

But there are other possible considerations

Compactness

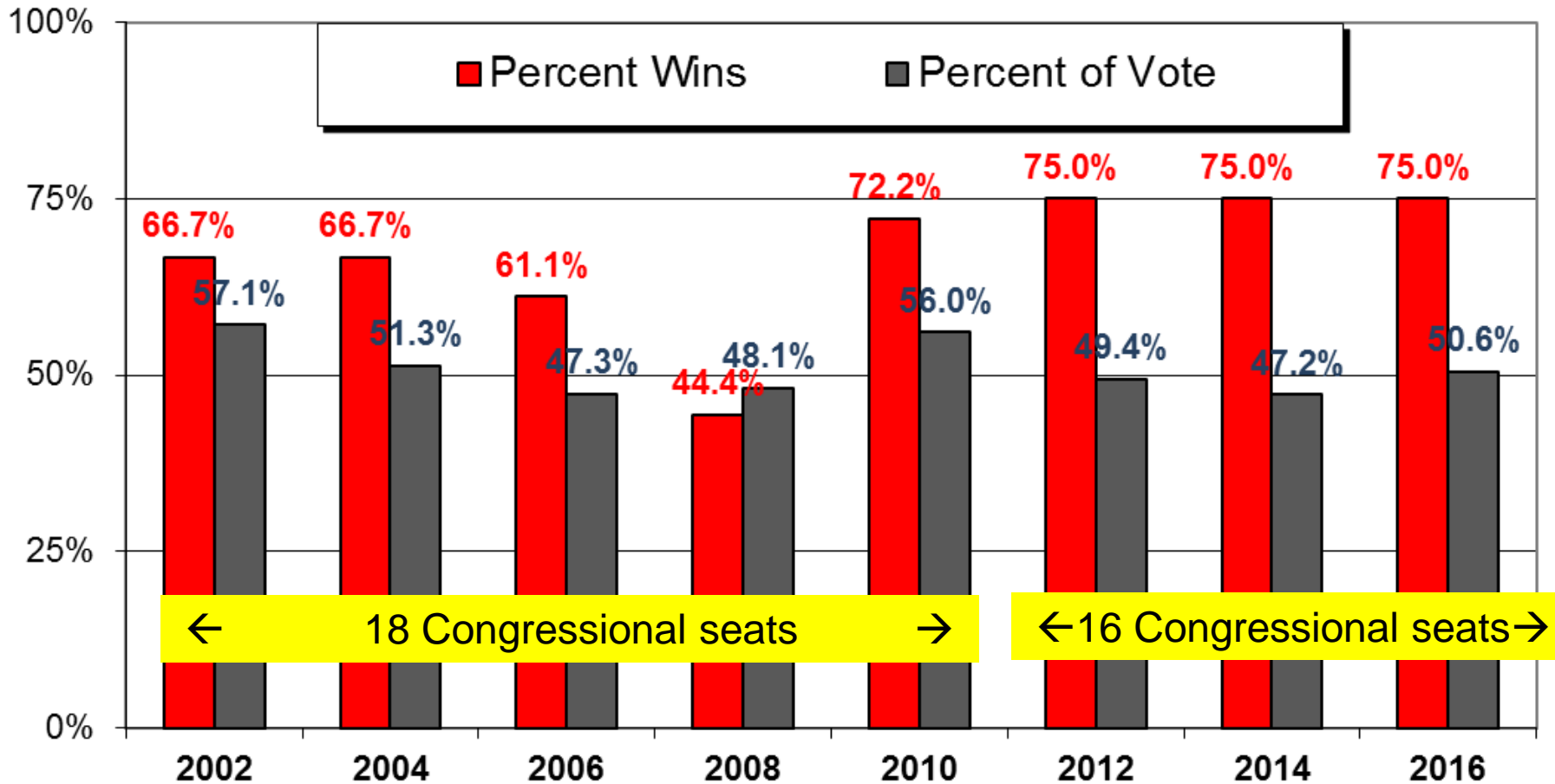
Communities of Interest. e.g., keep whole counties or municipalities together

Competitiveness. Maximize the number of legislative districts that could be won by either party.

Representational Fairness. Minimize the difference between proportions of votes for the political parties and the legislative seats won by those parties.

Representational Fairness

Congressional Wins and Percentage of Vote for the Controlling Party in Ohio, 2002 - 2016



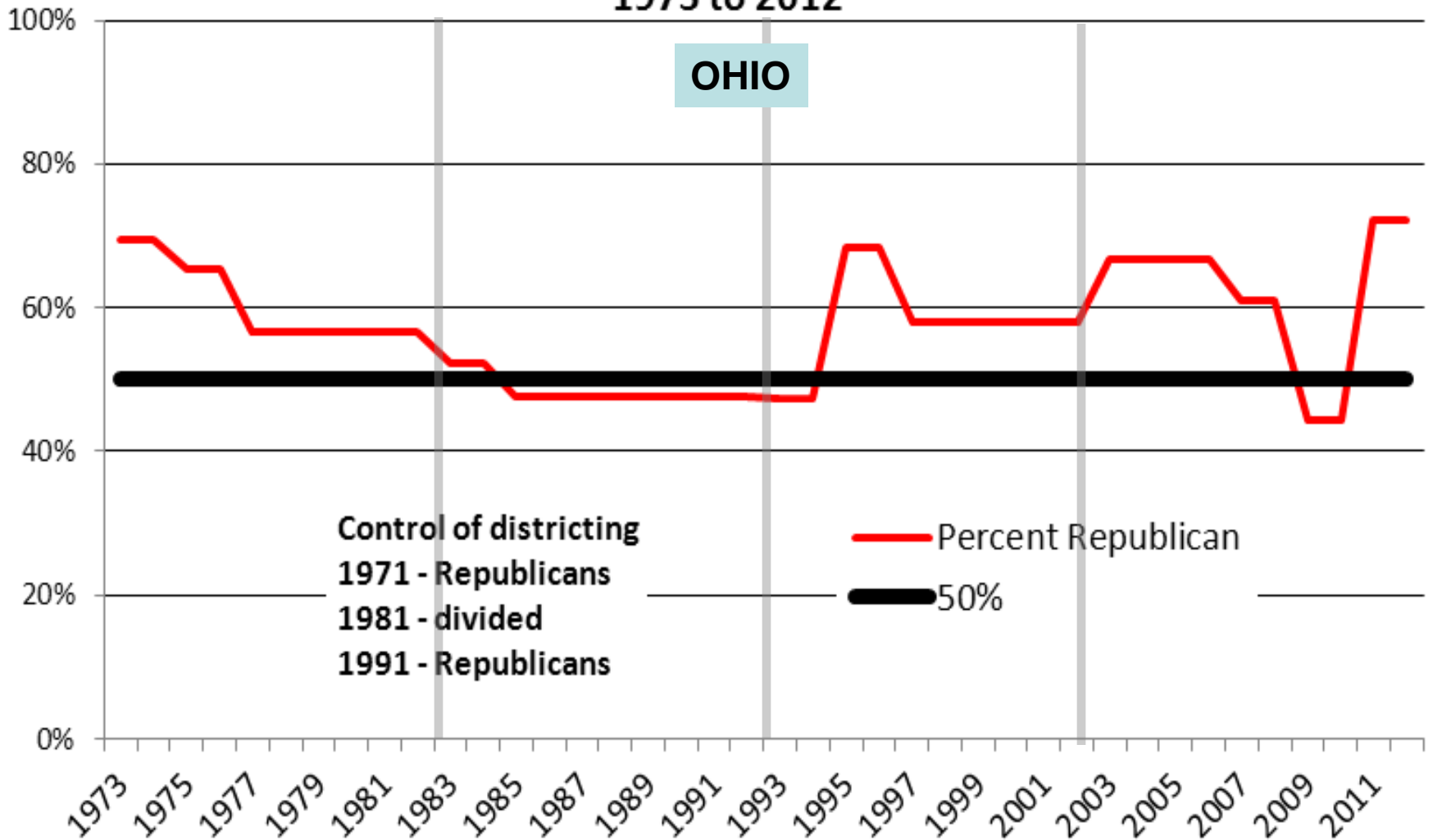
← 18 Congressional seats → ← 16 Congressional seats →

Additional seats won:
 2 3 2 -1 3 3 3 4

Percent Republican Congressional Representatives

1973 to 2012

OHIO



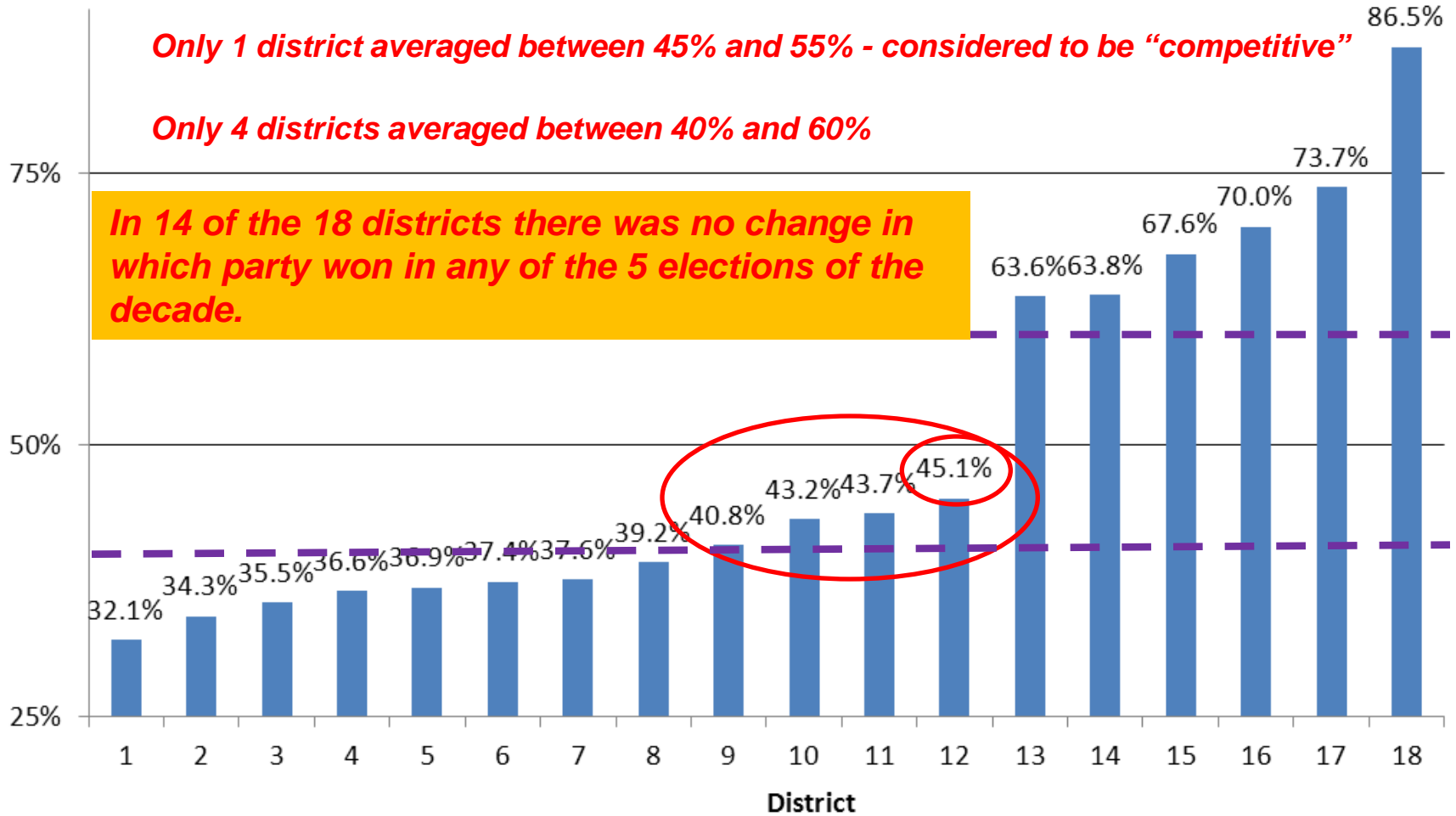
Competitiveness

Percentage of Votes for Congressional Candidates for Party Not in Control of Redistricting 2002 - 2010

Only 1 district averaged between 45% and 55% - considered to be "competitive"

Only 4 districts averaged between 40% and 60%

In 14 of the 18 districts there was no change in which party won in any of the 5 elections of the decade.



OHIO

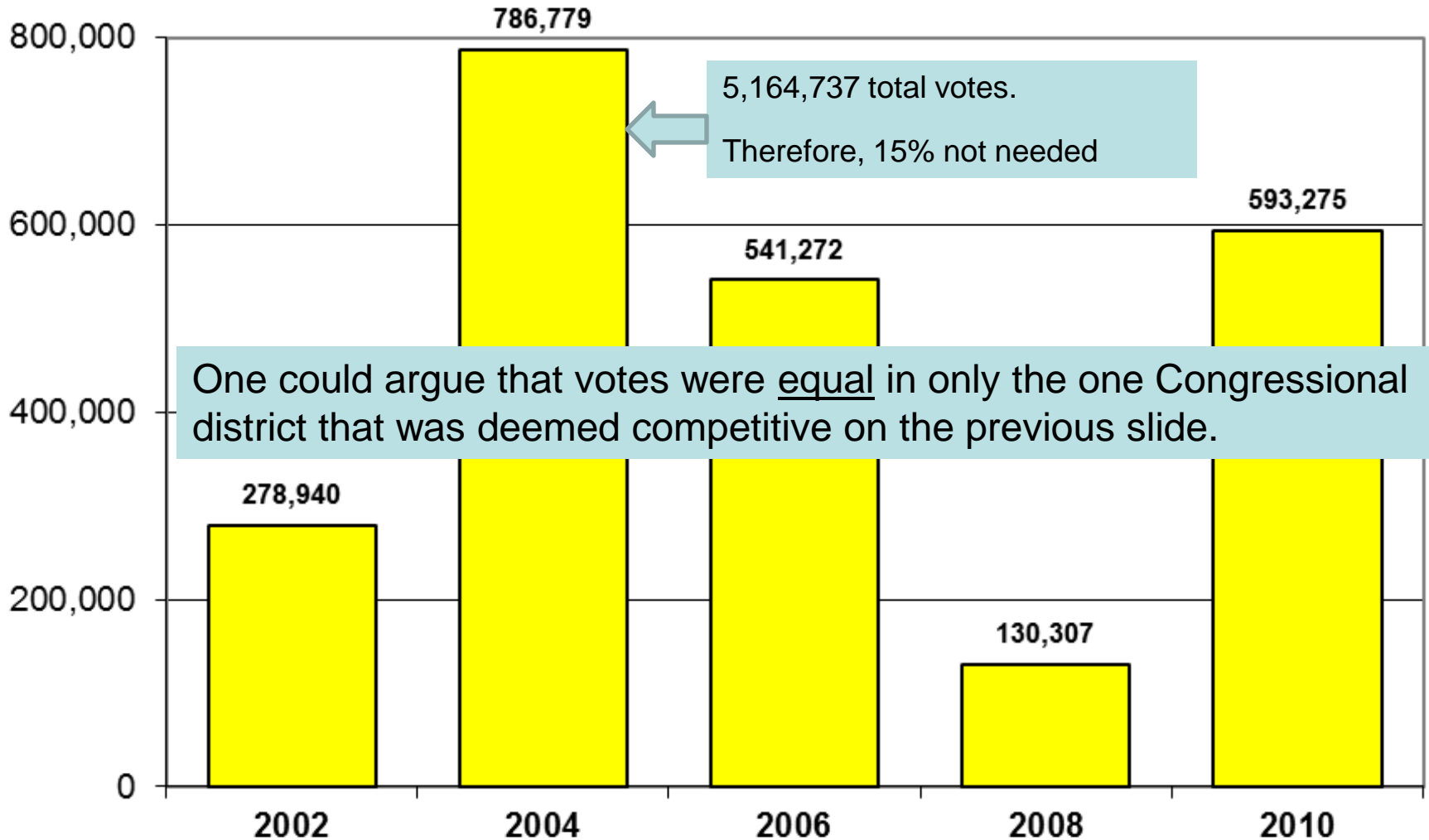
Within states, when boundaries don't reflect the preferences of the electorate,

votes don't count the same.



Wasted Votes by Party Not in Control of Redistricting Ohio Congressional Elections, 2002-2010

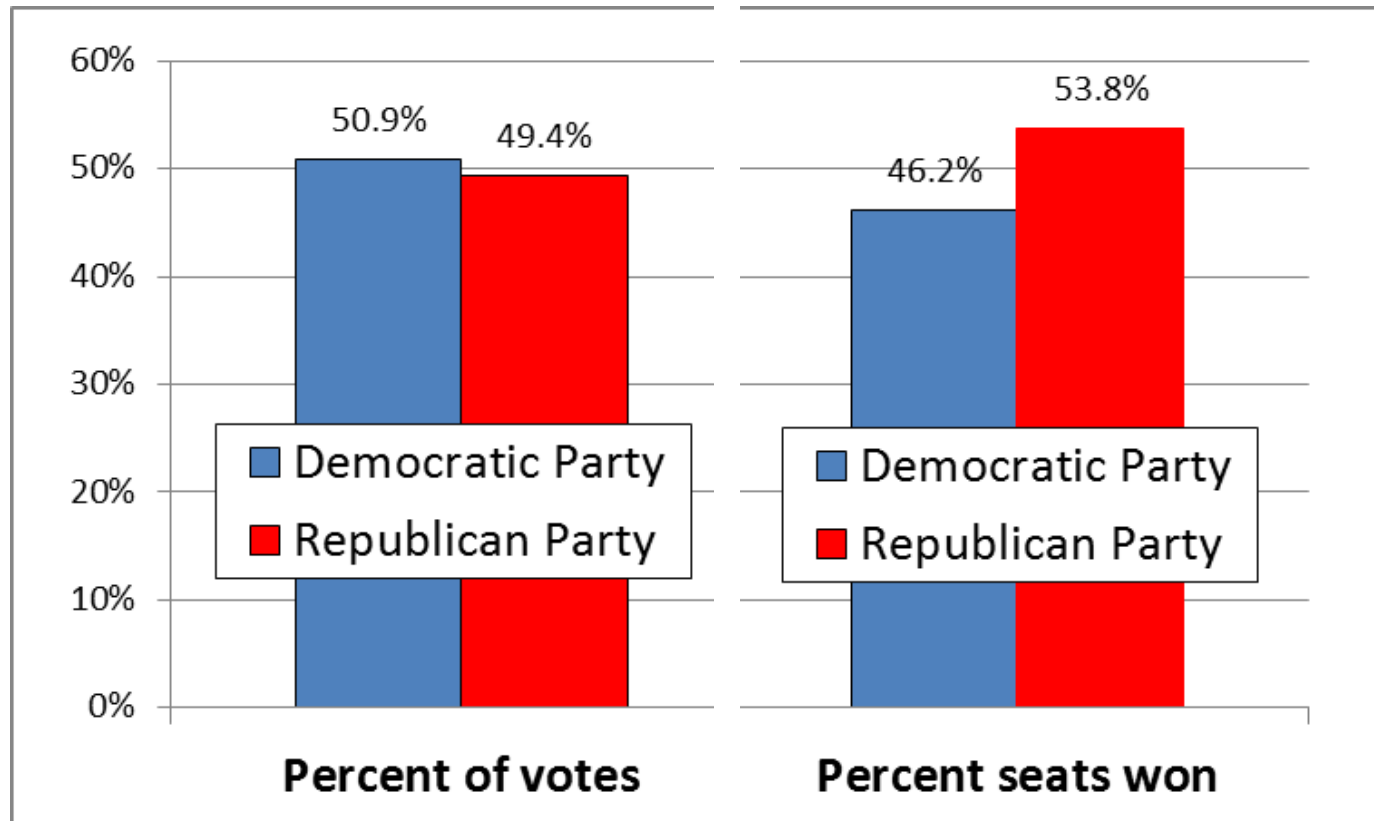
(votes beyond those needed to attain the number of elections won)



National Picture

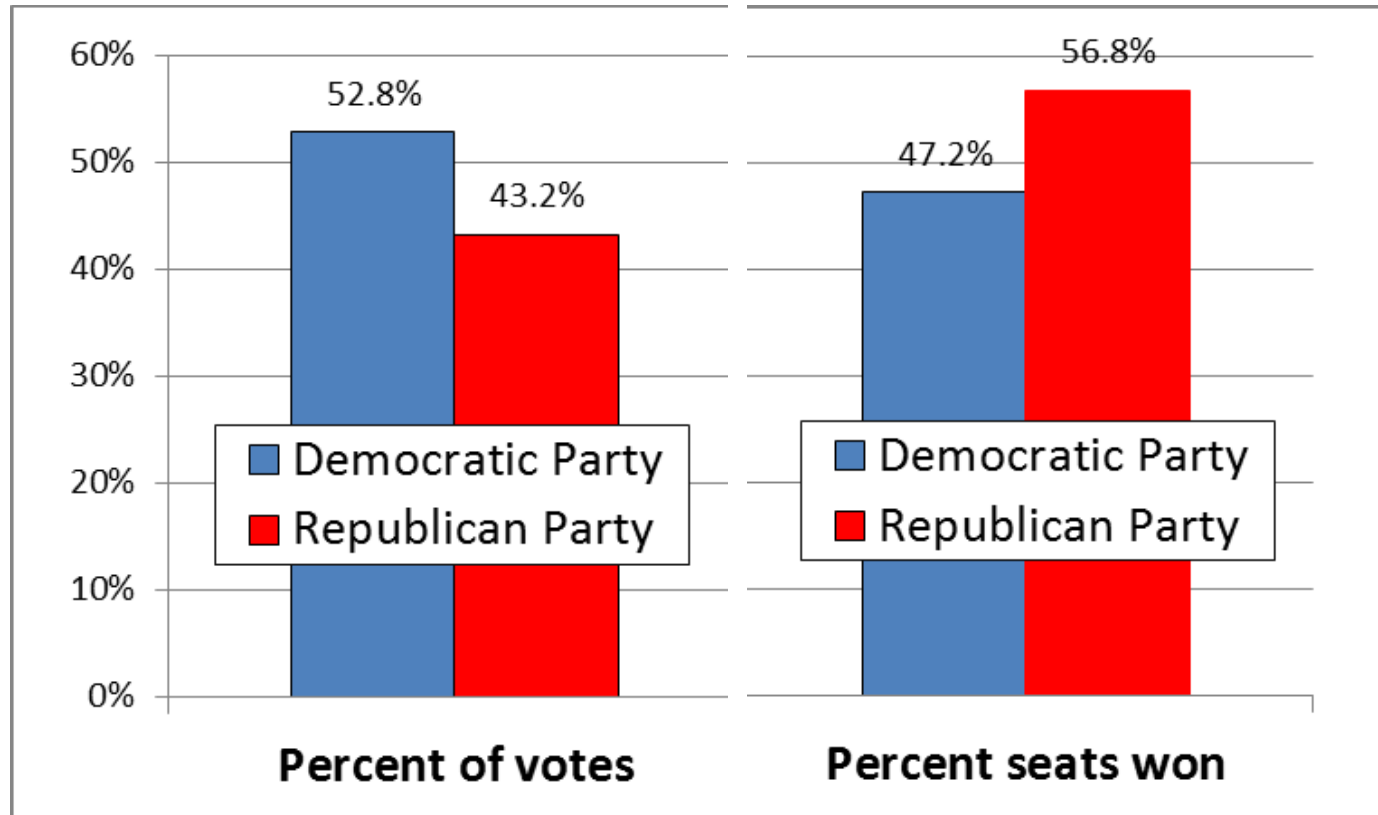


National Congressional Fairness, 2012



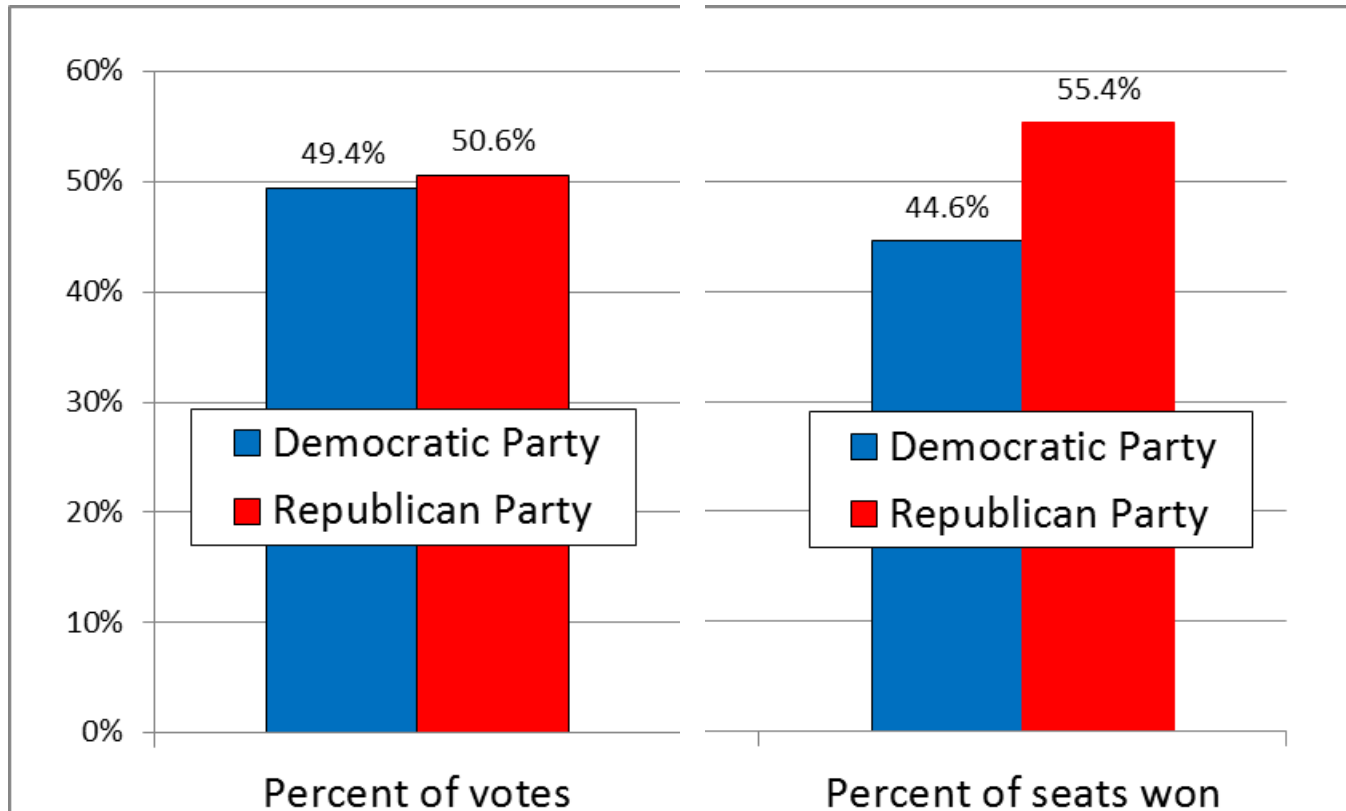
20 seats won by Republicans more than their share of votes would indicate.

National Congressional Fairness, 2014



17 seats won by Republicans more than their share of votes would indicate.

National Congressional Fairness, 2016



21 seats won by Republicans more than their share of votes would indicate.

END

