## Two-Party System Historical Eras in the U.S.: Partisan Re-alignment/De-alignment Periods

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<th>Critical Elections</th>
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<th>Major-Party Issue Stands</th>
<th>Voter Shift(s)</th>
<th>Major-Party Competitive Balance</th>
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<td><strong>1st Party System</strong></td>
<td>Aligning</td>
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<tr>
<td>1788 (1st election = 1789)</td>
<td>Aligning</td>
<td>Order vs. freedom</td>
<td>Federalists</td>
<td>Anti-Federalists (Republican-Democrats)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Should the states ratify the proposed new Constitution?</td>
<td>favored ratification</td>
<td>• favored states’ rights</td>
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<td>Should a Bill of Rights be added to the Constitution?</td>
<td>national supremacy</td>
<td>• insisted on individual freedom guarantees in Bill of Rights</td>
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<td>Should the national law be supreme over state law in the new federal system?</td>
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<td>• two other factors were the expansion of free public education and the creation of the ‘penny’ press newspapers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dealigning</td>
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<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Dealigning</td>
<td>Order vs. freedom</td>
<td>Whigs</td>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>Who should construct and regulate the national economic infrastructure – communications, transportation, banking &amp; finance</td>
<td>for massive federal subsidization and regulation of the emerging national economy</td>
<td>• opposed both</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Should the federal government abolish or otherwise limit slavery?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3rd Party System</td>
<td>Realigning</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Realigning</td>
<td>Equality vs. freedom</td>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>S. Democrats</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Should the federal government abolish or otherwise limit slavery?</td>
<td>favored preserving the union and the abolition of slavery</td>
<td>favored preservation of slavery and states’ rights, including the right to secede from the union</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Order vs. freedom</td>
<td>Do states have a right to secede from the Union? (Lincoln clearly saw this as the more important issue)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hayes (R) [elected by congressional commission]</td>
<td>Tilden (D) [popular-vote winner]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Harrison (R) [electoral-vote winner]</td>
<td>G. Cleveland (D) [popular-vote winner]</td>
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</tbody>
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**Notes:**
- **1st Party System (1788-1823):**
  - G. Washington (F) vs. J. Adams (F)
  - T. Jefferson (RD) [elected by US House] vs. A. Burr (RD) vs. J. Adams (F)
  - C. Pinckney (F)

- **2nd Party System (1824-1860):**
  - J. Q. Adams (W) [elected by US House] vs. A. Jackson (D) [popular-vote winner] vs. H. Clay (W) vs. W. Crawford (W)

- **3rd Party System (1860-1888):**
  - A. Lincoln (R) [electoral-vote winner with only 39% of the popular vote] vs. S. Douglas (ND) vs. J. Bell (Constitutional Union) vs. J. Breckinridge (SD)
  - Hayes (R) [elected by congressional commission] vs. Tilden (D) [popular-vote winner]
  - B. Harrison (R) [electoral-vote winner] vs. G. Cleveland (D) [popular-vote winner]
### 4th Party System

#### 1896
- W. McKinley (R)
- W.J. Bryan (D)

(1912)
- W. Wilson (D)
- T. Roosevelt (Progressive)
- W.H. Taft (R)

(1924)
- C. Coolidge (R)
- J. Davis (D)
- R. LaFollette (Progressive)

**Realigning Issue(s)**
- Order vs. freedom
  - Should the federal government switch from the gold to the silver standard?
  - Should the federal government switch from protectionism to free trade?
  - Should the federal government switch from restrictive immigration policies to an open-door policy?

**Major-Party Issue Stands**

- **Republicans**
  - Gold standard
  - Protectionism
  - Restrict immigration
- **Democrats**
  - Silver standard
  - Free trade
  - Open door

**Voter Shift(s)**
- Class voting
  - Urban industrial labor swung to Republicans
  - Southern & Western farmers stayed with Democrats

**Major-Party Competitive Balance**
- Republicans dominant over Democrats

  - W. Wilson was the only Democratic president and he only won in 1912 because the Republicans split and in 1916 because he pledged to ‘keep us out of war’
  - Both parties co-oped Progressive issue stands – the Republicans under T. Roosevelt and the Democrats under W.J. Bryan and W. Wilson

### 5th Party System

#### 1932
- F.D. Roosevelt (D)
- H. Hoover (R)

1948
- H. Truman (D)
- T. Dewey (R)
- S. Thurmond (States’ Rights)

**Realigning Issue(s)**
- Equality vs. freedom
  - Should the federal government provide massive public assistance programs to the unemployed and elderly?
  - Should the federal government significantly expand its regulation of the economy to guarantee more equitable outcomes in banking, securities exchanges, labor-management, farming, etc.?

**Major-Party Issue Stands**

- **Republicans**
  - let state and private charities handle public assistance
  - let the free market regulate the economy
- **Democrats**
  - a “New Deal” on both

**Voter Shift(s)**
- Class voting
  - a new Democratic majority came mostly from the lower and working classes and was a “coalition of diverse minorities” –
  - union labor
  - northern inner-city Catholics, Jews, and Blacks
  - white Southerners
  - the smaller Republican coalition came mainly from the middle-to-upper classes and was largely non-Southern WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant)

**Major-Party Competitive Balance**
- Democrats regained dominance over Republicans for the first time since 1860

  - FDR elected to 4 terms
  - H. Truman won upset victory in 1948
  - D. Eisenhower was the only Republican elected president in this period

### 6th Party System

#### 1968
- R. Nixon (R)
- H. Humphrey (D)
- G. Wallace (Am. Independent)

2000
- G.W. Bush [electoral-vote winner]
- A. Gore [popular-vote winner]

**Dealigning Issue(s)**
- Equality vs. freedom
  - Civil rights
- Order vs. freedom
  - Vietnam war
  - Crime
  - Public morality

**Hot-button wedge issues continue to divide both parties**

**Order vs. freedom**
- Establishment of religion – abortion, homosexuality, fetal tissue research, public-school prayer
- Balanced federal budget
- Defense spending
- Anti-terrorism policy
- Energy policy
- Drug policy

**Equality vs. freedom**
- Affirmative action
- Election campaign finance
- Environmental protection
- Globalization of the economy
- Health care
- School vouchers
- Social Security
- Taxes

**Both party coalitions internally divided**
- many socially conservative Democrats became “Reagan Democrats” in both the North and South
- many Republican “country-club” economic conservatives and “soccer Moms” are opposed to much of the issue agenda of the social-conservative wing of the GOP
- the South realigns from one-party
- Democratic to two-party competitive
- the Northeast realigns from the most Republican region in presidential voting to the most Democratic region

**Neither party dominant nationwide**
- this era produces the longest period of divided party control of government in history
- significant decline in partisan loyalty
- significant increase in political independents
- significant increase in split-ticket voting
- significant declines in political trust and turnout