

1. The changing composition of the political parties

Over the past quarter-century, the demographic profile of the U.S. has been changing: The country has become more racially and ethnically diverse, less likely to be affiliated with a religion, better educated and older. National demographic trends coupled with different patterns of party affiliation among demographic groups have fundamentally changed the makeup of the Republican and Democratic parties.

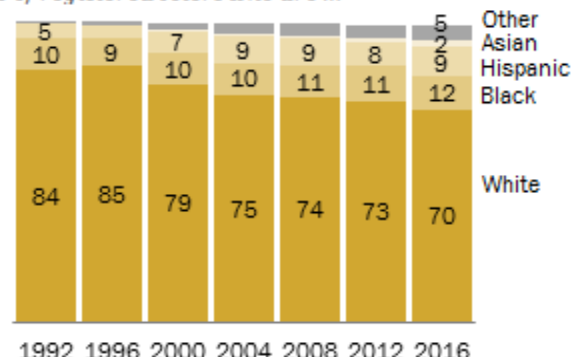
Overall, non-Hispanic whites now make 70% of all registered voters, down from 84% in 1992. The share of Hispanic voters has nearly doubled over this period: From 5% in 1992 to 9% today. The share describing their race as mixed race or “other” also has grown from 1% to 5%. Since 1992, the share of all voters who are black has edged up slightly from 10% to 12%.

The country’s growing racial and ethnic diversity has changed the composition of both the Republican and Democratic parties, but the impact has been much more pronounced among Democrats and Democratic leaners.

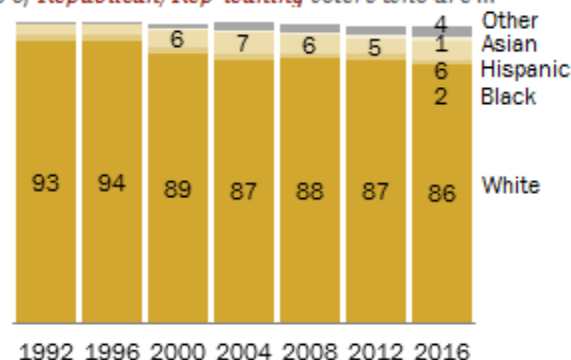
In 1992, 76% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters were white, while 17% were black and just 6% were Hispanic. In surveys conducted thus far in 2016, the profile of Democratic voters has grown much more diverse: 57% are white, 21% are black, 12% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian and 5% describe themselves as mixed race or describe their race as “other.”

Racial and ethnic profile of voters

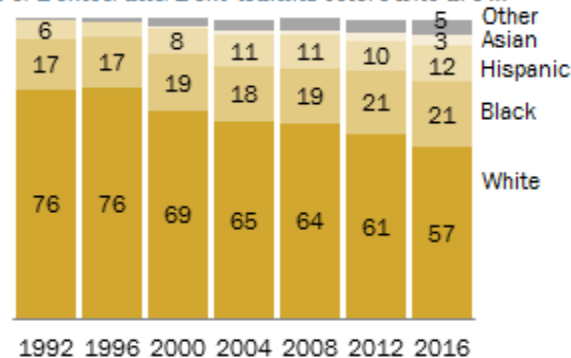
% of registered voters who are ...



% of Republican/Rep-leaning voters who are ...



% of Democratic/Dem-leaning voters who are ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Asians are non-Hispanic and English-speaking only. Other includes those who identify as more than one race.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Age profile of voters

% of registered voters who are ...

19	19	19	19	19	20	21	65+
21	21	23	25	27	31	30	50-64
40	42	40	39	37	32	31	30-49
19	16	17	15	16	15	16	18-29
1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	

% of Republican/Rep-leaning voters who are ...

19	18	18	18	19	23	25	65+
19	22	22	25	28	31	33	50-64
40	43	42	42	39	33	29	30-49
21	17	17	14	13	12	13	18-29
1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	

% of Democratic/Dem-leaning voters who are ...

19	20	20	20	18	19	19	65+
23	21	23	25	27	31	29	50-64
40	41	39	37	36	32	32	30-49
18	17	17	16	18	18	20	18-29
1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	

Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The composition of Republican and Republican-leaning registered voters has also grown somewhat more diverse over the last 24 years, though the pace of change lags behind that of the country overall and the party remains overwhelmingly white. In 1992, 93% of Republican voters were white; that share has declined somewhat to 86% today. The share of Hispanic voters in the GOP has edged up from 3% to 6%. There has been no increase in the share of Republicans who are black; blacks made up 2% of all Republican voters in 1992 and make the same share of all GOP registered voters today.

The population is growing older due to longer life expectancy, the graying of the large Baby Boom generation, and a decline in birth rates since the Baby Boom. In 1992, the median age of all registered voters was 46; today the median age has risen to 50.

In 1992, the Republican Party was made up of somewhat younger voters than the Democratic Party. However, as the country has aged over the past 24 years, there has been a dramatic shift in the composition of the two coalitions, which has resulted in Republican and Republican-leaning voters now being a significantly older cohort than Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters.

In surveys conducted thus far in 2016, 58% of Republican voters are age 50 and older, compared with far fewer (41%) who are under age 50. This marks a flip of the

party's age composition from 1992 when 61% of all GOP voters were under age 50 and just 38% were 50 and older.

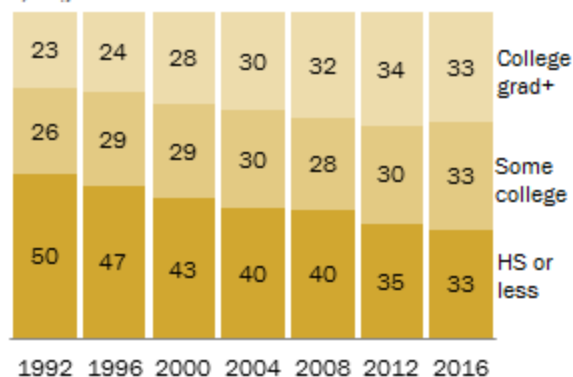
The impact of an aging population has been less pronounced among Democratic and Democratic leaners. Today, 51% of Democratic voters today are under age 50, while 48% are 50 and older. In 1992, 57% were under age 50, compared with 42% who were age 50 and older.

In 1992, the median age of Republican voters was 46, while the median age of Democratic voters was 47. Today, the median age of Republican voters has increased six years, to age 52, while the median age of Democratic voters has increased one year, to 48.

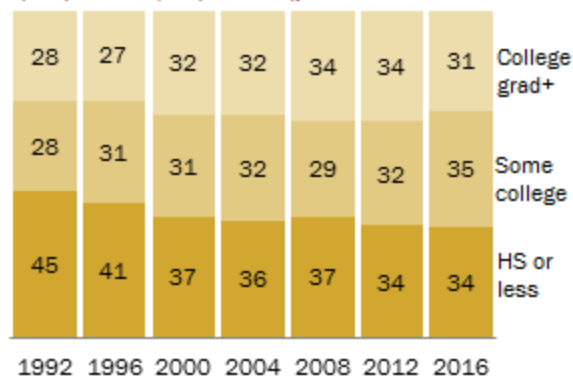
Over the past quarter-century, registered voters in the U.S. have become better educated. In 1992, half of voters had no college experience; today that share has fallen to 33%. At the same time, the

Educational profile of voters

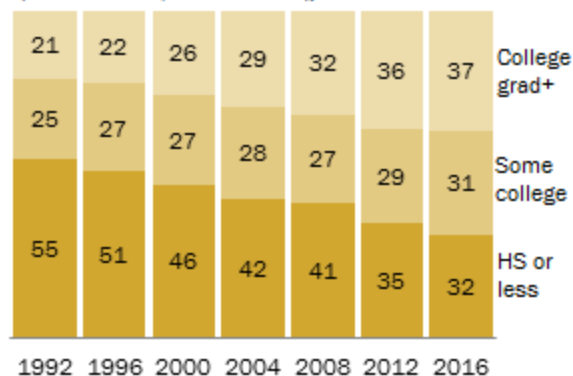
% of registered voters who are ...



% of Republican/Rep-leaning voters who are ...



% of Democratic/Dem-leaning voters who are ...



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

share of voters with some college experience has risen from 26% to 33% and the share with at least a four-year college degree has grown from 23% to 33%.

As the country has become better educated, the education profiles of the two parties have flipped: In 1992, Republican voters were much better educated than Democratic voters; today, Democrats are somewhat better educated than Republicans.

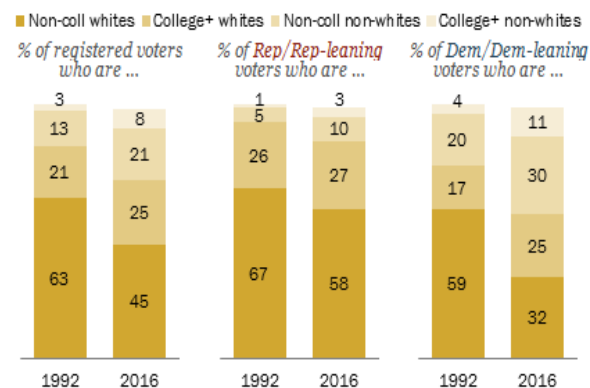
Among Republican voters, the share with a college degree has increased from 28% in 1992 to 31% in 2016; the share with some college experience, but no degree, has also grown from 28% to 35%. There has been a corresponding decline in the share with no college experience over this period (from 45% to 34%).

There has been a sharper increase among Democratic than Republican registered voters in the share who have at least a college degree. Overall, 37% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning registered voters have a college degree today, up 16 points from 1992 (21%), and higher than the 31% of Republican voters who are college educated. The share of Democrats and Democratic leaners with some college experience has increased from 25% to 31%. Those with no college experience – who made up a 55%-majority of Democratic voters in 1992 – now make up about a third of all Democratic registered voters (32%).

In 1992, a 63%-majority of all registered voters were whites without a college degree. Due to growing

diversity and rising levels of education, the share of all voters who are non-college whites has fallen dramatically over the last 24 years, to 45% in 2016 surveys.

Non-college whites make up a much smaller share of Democratic voters than in 1992



Notes: Based on registered voters. Non-college includes all of those who do not have a degree from a four-year college or university.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While the share of all voters who are non-college whites has fallen 18 points, the share who are whites with a college degree has edged up from 21% in 1992 to 25% today.

Non-whites now make up a larger share of all voters than they did in 1992 and this increase has occurred among both non-whites with a college degree (from 3% of all registered voters in 1992 to 8% in 2016) and non-whites without a college degree (from 13% to 21%).

The decline in the share of whites without a college degree has been far more pronounced within the Democratic than Republican Party. Non-college whites made up 59% of

Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters in 1992. Today, only about a third (32%) of Democratic voters are non-college whites.

Among Republicans, the decline has been more modest: 58% of all GOP voters today are non-college whites, which is a somewhat smaller majority than in 1992 (67%). As a result of these differential rates of change, the gap between the share of non-college whites in the Republican Party and Democratic Party has increased significantly from eight points in 1992 to 26 points today.

The country's religious landscape also has been shifting over the past few decades. One of the most fundamental changes has been the increase in the share of voters who do not affiliate with a religion (from 8% in 1996 to 21% in 2016).

The increase in the share of voters who do not identify with a religious group is occurring faster within the Democratic than Republican Party, moving the religious profiles of the two coalitions further apart from one another.

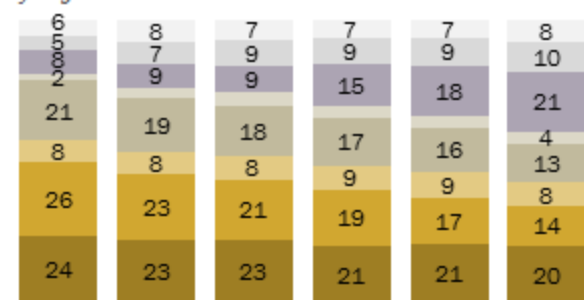
In 2016, nearly three-in-ten (29%) Democratic and Democratic-leaning registered voters are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – up from just 10% in 1996. Overall, 11% of Democratic voters are white mainline Protestants, 10% are white Catholics and 8% are white evangelical Protestants; all three of these groups make up much smaller shares of all Democratic voters than they did in 1996. Black Protestants make up 15% of all Democratic voters and Hispanic Catholics account for 6%; there has been no decline in the shares of these two groups.

Shifts in the composition of the Republican Party have been more modest and GOP voters are now even more likely than Democratic voters to affiliate with a religion than they were 20 years ago. About a third (35%) of Republican voters are white evangelical Protestants, 18% are white Catholics, 17% are white mainline Protestants and 12% are religiously unaffiliated. The share of GOP voters that is unaffiliated has risen six points since 1996. There has been little change in the share of all GOP voters who are white evangelical Protestants or white Catholics over the past two decades, but the share who are white mainline Protestants has declined 12 points.

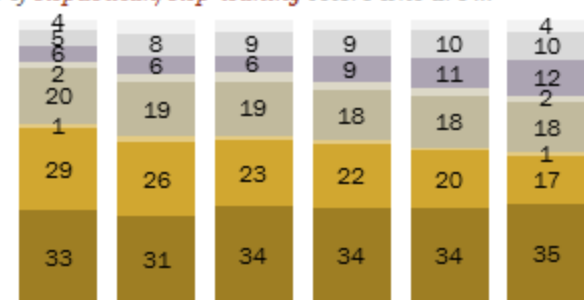
Changing religious profile of voters

■ White evang. ■ White mainline ■ Black Prot.
 ■ White Catholic ■ Hisp. Catholic ■ Unaffiliated
 ■ Other Christian ■ All others

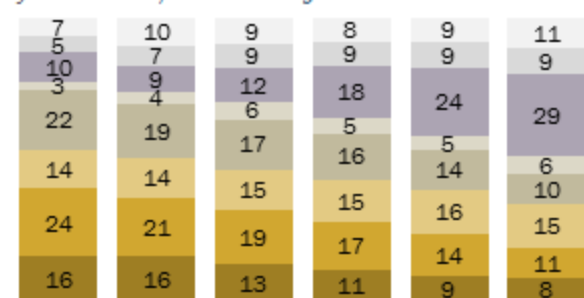
% of registered voters who are ...



% of Republican/Rep-leaning voters who are ...



% of Democratic/Dem-leaning voters who are ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. See appendix A for more details on religious category definitions. Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER