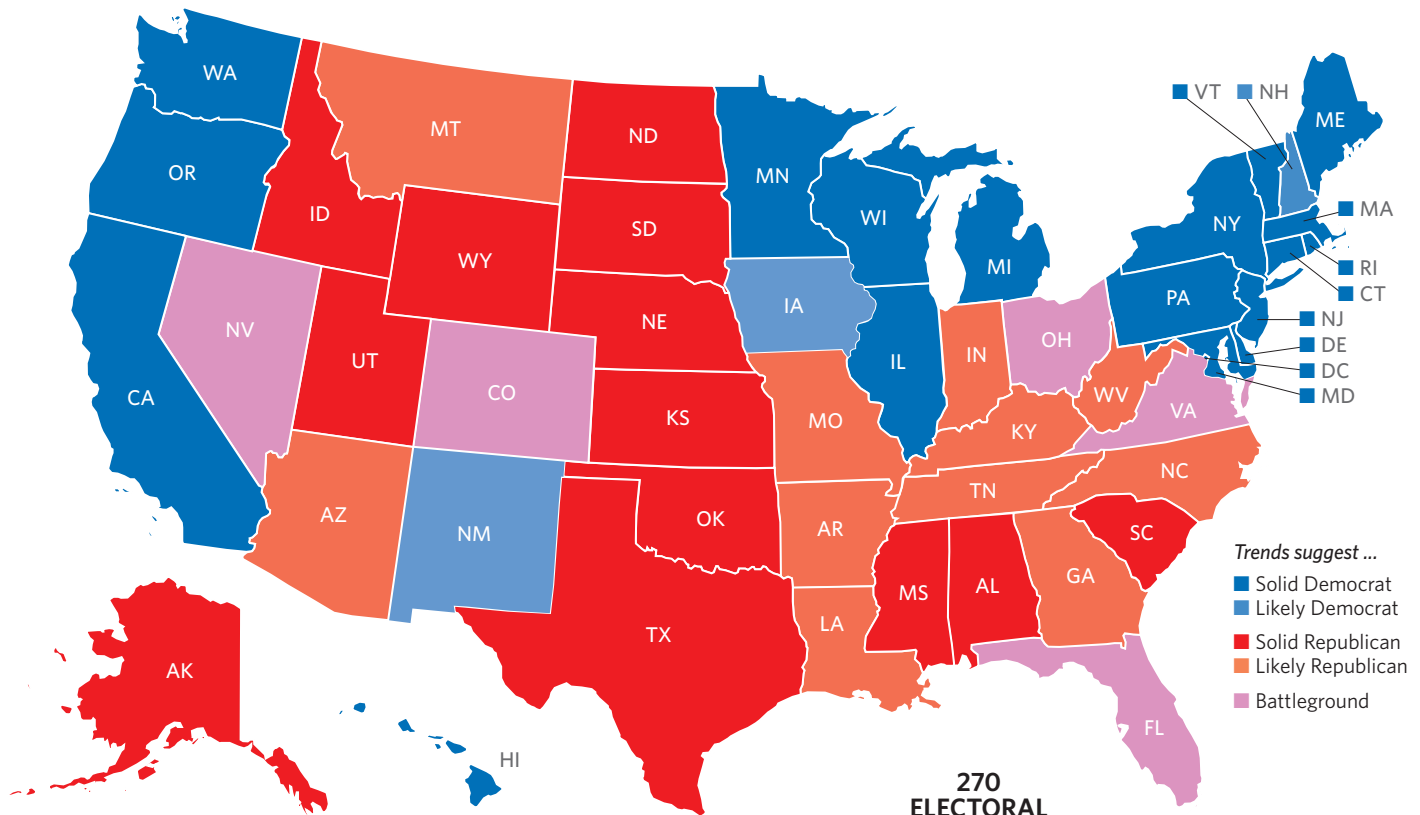


# Voting Trends May Decide Election in 2016

The presidential candidate who receives 270 of the 538 electoral votes will be declared the winner. Looking at voting history, the road to the White House is far more straightforward for the Democratic party than it is for the GOP.



*Trends suggest ...*

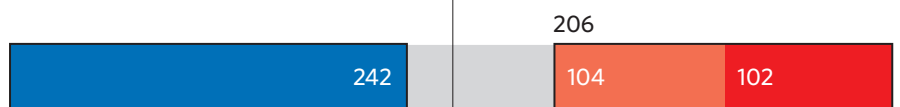
- Solid Democrat
- Likely Democrat
- Solid Republican
- Likely Republican
- Battleground

270  
ELECTORAL  
VOTES

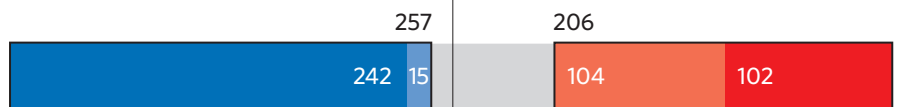
**SOLID PICKS.** 30 states can be categorized as Solid Democrat or Solid Republican based on consistent voting in every presidential election since 1992. Following this trend, the Democrats would be short only 28 electoral votes.



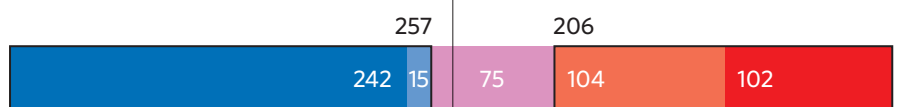
**LIKELY GOP.** The Republicans are likely to pick up all nine states that voted Republican since 2000. To this list add strong Republican states Indiana and North Carolina (with the exception of 2008, Republicans have won Indiana since 1964 and North Carolina since 1976).



**LIKELY DEM.** Democrats would likely pick up Iowa and New Mexico given both states have voted Democratic since 1992 except in 2004. Add New Hampshire which has voted Democratic since 1992 except in 2000.



**BATTLEGROUND.** From here, five battleground states remain. The Republicans need to win Ohio, Virginia, and Florida, plus either Colorado or Nevada to win the presidency. Anything short of that, the Democrats win the White House.



# Voting Trends Don't Bode Well for Republicans

by **Matt A. Mayer**

September 11, 2015

In an op-ed last year, political Svengali Karl Rove correctly noted that history is against the same party winning the presidency three terms in a row. In fact, George H.W. Bush's win in 1988 is the only example in the last sixty years. Rove used this factoid to make the case against Hillary Clinton (or another Democrat) winning in 2016. This electoral history, however, is misleading for one very important reason: the Electoral College advantage Democrats now have due to the big "blue" states.

In the six elections since 1988, Republicans have only won twice. Those two victories by George W. Bush barely hit the 270 electoral vote threshold: 271 in 2000 and 286 in 2004. Don't forget Al Gore won the popular vote in 2000, losing Florida by a mere 537 votes. The average Electoral Vote total for Bush's wins was 278.5.

In contrast, the four Democrat wins in 1992, 1996, 2008, and 2012 hit 370, 379, 365, and 332 Electoral Votes, respectively. The average Electoral Vote total for the four Democrat wins was 361.5.

Why such lopsided wins for Democrats and narrow wins for Republicans?

Rove's historical guide is significantly weakened by the low margin of error strategy to which Republicans must adhere. Specifically, Republicans must nearly run the table on the battleground states in order to squeak into The White House, whereas Democrats have multiple pathways to victory.

Let me break it down by Electoral Votes.

The Democrat candidate almost certainly will win the following states: California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Republicans haven't won New York, Oregon, Washington, or Wisconsin since Ronald Reagan's 1984 landslide win. They haven't won California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania since 1988. These nineteen states have voted with Democrats every election since 1992 and are worth 242 Electoral Votes.

Several states are categorized as battleground states, but the voting trends don't substantiate those assignments. Except in the 2004 election, Iowa and New Mexico have voted for the Democrat in every election since 1992. Similarly, except for the 2000 election, New Hampshire has voted for the Democrat in every election since 1992. Those states likely will continue voting left in 2016. Thus, the Democrat likely enters the 2016 election with a base of 257 Electoral Votes – just 13 votes short of the presidency.

The Republican candidate likely will win Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Thirteen of these states voted with Republicans in every election since 1992, with another nine voting with Republicans in the last four elections. Indiana and North Carolina went for Barack Obama in 2008, but by just 29,000 and 92,000 votes, respectively. That is the only time Indiana didn't vote Republican since 1964; North Carolina hadn't voted for a Democrat since 1976. Those states give Republicans a base of 206 Electoral Votes. This allocation means Republicans need 64 Electoral Votes to win The White House.

There are only 75 Electoral Votes left among the five true battleground states. Among the remaining five states, three have picked the winner in the last five elections: Florida, Nevada, and Ohio. All three states have Republican governors, including presidential candidate Ohio Governor John Kasich and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush. Florida has the most Elec-

toral Votes up-for-grab at 29, with Ohio and Virginia next at 18 and 13 votes, respectively.

In Colorado, until Cory Gardner's big U.S. Senate win in 2014, a Republican had not won for Governor, U.S. Senator, or President since 2004. At the same time Gardner won, Democrat Governor John Hickenlooper won reelection. In 2015, Colorado Republicans have been engaged in an ugly intraparty fight that may undermine Republicans in 2016.

Finally, in Virginia, with the substantial population growth in Northern Virginia that leans left, it has become harder for Republicans to win statewide, as there aren't enough votes outside of NoVa to overcome that Democrat stronghold. To wit, Obama won in 2008 and 2012, Democrat Terry McAuliffe won the governor's race in 2013, and both U.S. Senators are Democrats. Yet, other than in 2008 and 2012, Virginia has voted for the Republican presidential candidate. The key is whether the NoVa population boom has permanently turned Virginia into a blue state for presidential

elections.

The bottom line is that the Republican candidate must win four out of five of the battleground states to win. To put even more emphasis on the Republican's tough predicament, a loss in just Florida, Ohio, or Virginia ends the race. Period.

History is a reliable guide upon which to make predictions about the future. It depends, however, on the timeframes you use to make those predictions. Democrats may not in fact win a third straight term in 2016, but the electoral history since 1992 gives them a much smoother path than Republicans. Unless it wants to continue winning just two out of six elections, the conservatives must select a nominee who has the highest chance to win Florida, Ohio, and Virginia.

We could see surprises on Election Day that scramble the above analysis, but I wouldn't bet on it.

*Matt A. Mayer is the President of Opportunity Ohio.*