

*Southern Politics after the Election of President Clinton:
Continued Transformation Toward the Republican Party?**

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To whom does the South belong politically, now that an all-southern ticket has reclaimed the White House for the Democratic party? Review of 1992 voting returns for national, statewide, and legislative races in the South, contrasted with those from earlier presidential years, lead to only one conclusion: the South continues to move toward the Republican party. The Clinton-Gore ticket ran behind its percentage of the national vote in most southern states, as well as behind all Democratic candidates in statewide races, and would have won without any southern electoral votes; whereas Bush-Quayle ran ahead of their percentage of the national vote in every southern state except Clinton's Arkansas, while Republicans gained seats in southern legislatures and congressional delegations. It is suggested that southern electoral college votes won by Democratic presidential candidates in 1976 and 1992 hinged upon Democratic vote-getters in races for statewide offices in each state carried except the presidential candidates' home states.

Where is the South after the election of President Bill Clinton? Presumably the election of Clinton, a Democratic Leadership Council social and economic moderate, will draw the Democratic party back to the political center of American politics through his leadership on the issues and public policies that he propelled to the fore of the national political agenda. Will this, in turn, enhance the electoral prospects of similarly positioned Democratic candidates in his native South? A partial answer to this question lies in the changed context of contemporary southern politics. Most of the rest of the answer comes from an examination of the 1992 presidential election, including its impact on the region.

Partisan and Political Context

Race. The starting point for any analysis of southern politics is V.O. Key, Jr.'s classic *Southern Politics* (1949), in which he highlights and weaves throughout his analysis the centrality of race as the defining characteristic of southern politics. Key concludes that "The race issue broadly defined must be considered as the number one problem on the southern agenda. Lacking a solution for it, all else fails" (1949, 675). While the Civil Rights Movement etched the plight of southern blacks on the public

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consciousness, the racially conservative 1964 Republican presidential campaign of Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater forced the Republican and Democratic parties and their national elected officials to take opposite sides on the race issue. Although it ultimately failed, the strategy of President Lyndon B. Johnson and his congressional partisans in forcing the adoption of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was to shore up their political base in the Deep South states by bringing massive numbers of disfranchised black Americans onto the voter rolls and into the Democratic party (Carmines and Stimson 1989, 49-50; Black and Black 1992, 149-158, 209-210; cf. Bartley and Graham 1975).

The unintended consequence of this strategy was to drive conservative whites, especially those who were racially conservative, into the Republican party. As noted by James L. Sundquist (1983, 297):

The process . . . appears to be one of spiraling interaction: as conservatives, particularly the younger ones, move into the Republican party, the liberal Democrats have an increasing chance to displace the remaining conservatives who control their party locally. At some point, liberals begin to win nominations. This drives out still more conservatives, which places party control even more firmly in the hands of the liberals. The increase in black voting has expedited the process . . .

The impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 went beyond mere voter registration for black southerners (Moreland, Steed, and Baker 1987)—it opened the door for their nomination and election to political offices at all levels of government. At the time of the Voting Rights Act, there were 72 black elected officials in the South excluding those in party positions; the number increased to 565 in 1970, 2,457 in 1980, and 4,369 in 1990 (Hadley 1983, 101; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1991, 266). Certainly, the election of blacks to political and party offices accelerated the movement of conservative whites into the Republican party.

Voter registration, moreover, was not a one-way street. As Table 1 shows, in 1964, the year immediately before the Voting Rights Act, the proportion of age-eligible whites registered to vote (61.1 percent) was twice that of blacks (29.1 percent). While the voter registration gap between blacks and whites closed considerably immediately before and after the Voting Rights Act, it ranged from 3.2 percentage points in 1970 to 11.7 percent in favor of whites in 1980, stabilizing at 9.1 percent during the mid-1980s.¹ It appears that the 1980 presidential contest between incumbent Democrat Jimmy Carter and conservative Republican challenger Ronald Reagan motivated a disproportionate number of whites (79.4 percent VAP) to register at the same time that blacks appeared to lose interest (57.7 percent VAP).

Table 1. Voter Registration (Millions) by Race, 1960-1986

	Blacks		Whites		White-Black Voter Registration	
	N	% VAP ^a	N	% VAP ^a	Ratio ^b	% Black ^c
1960	1.46	29.1	12.28	61.1	8.4	10.6
1964	2.16	na ^d	14.26	na ^d	6.6	13.2
1966	2.69	na ^d	14.31	na ^d	5.3	15.8
1970	3.36	66.0	16.99	69.2	5.1	16.5
1976	4.15	63.1	21.69	67.9	5.2	16.1
1980	4.25	57.7	24.98	79.4	5.9	14.5
1984	5.60	66.2	28.00	75.3	5.0	16.7
1986	5.45	60.8	27.03	69.9	5.0	16.8

^aVAP = voting age population.

^bRatio = the number of whites registered to vote for each black who is registered to vote.

^c% Black = the percentage of the registered voters who are black.

^dna = not available.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*: 1977, 1981, and 1990 (98th, 102d, and 110th editions), Washington, DC, 1977, 1981, and 1990, pp. 507, 495, and 264.

It is important to remember that discriminatory voter registration regulations designed for blacks also had been applied to poor, illiterate whites (Key 1949, 542-550). Consequently, more than five whites for every black were registered to vote in the two decades after the Voting Rights Act (see ratios in Table 1), a ratio that depressed the black proportion of the electorate, which grew from 13.2 percent of the southern electorate just prior to the VRA to only 16.8 percent by the mid-1980s.

Participation. As late as 1960, voter turnout in the South varied considerably from that for the nation as a whole, reflecting the preoccupation of the former with state over presidential politics. Turnout in the nation that year exceeded that in the South by 62.8 to 39.4 percent—a difference of 23.4 points. This turnout gap narrowed to 17.0 percentage points in 1964, and continued to shrink to 10.9 points in 1972, 5.9 in 1980, and 4.0 in 1992 (Hadley 1983, 100; Pear 1992). Increased voter turnout for presidential elections and increased voter registration among both blacks and whites combined to change the election context (e.g., see Black and Black 1987, 259-316; Stanley 1987).

Straight ticket voting for Democratic presidential and congressional candidates decreased while that for Republican presidential and congressional candidates increased. Confining the analysis to whites, those who split

their ballots for presidential candidates of one political party and congressional candidates of the other voted disproportionately for Republican presidential candidates. Straight ticket Republican and split ticket presidential/congressional voters shared a number of characteristics. They were of high socioeconomic status and held conservative positions on political issues, making them prime candidates for eventual movement to Republican consistency, given the opportunity (Hadley and Howell 1980, 134-148).²

In his careful and comprehensive analysis of the partisan identification and voting behavior of southerners, Stanley (1988) sought to explain the drop in Democratic partisan identification (22 percentage points) and increase in both Republican (18 points) and independent (13 points) partisan identification during the 1952-1984 interlude. Native white southerners, approximately two-thirds of the electorate, are the key to partisan change in the voting age population, as native black Democrats and in-migrant Republicans balance each other out. Native whites of both the pre- and post-VRA generations, in fact, were found responsible for most of the partisan change. He goes on to conclude “. . . that despite the 20-point Democratic lead in party identification in 1984 . . . , the Republican Party can be considered the majority party in the South in presidential voting” (Stanley 1988, 79). Reaching the same conclusion, Black and Black (1992) carefully document the transfer of southern white conservative influence from the national Democratic Party in the 1940s and 1950s to the national Republican Party in the 1970s and 1980s. If Democratic presidential candidates, including native southerners, are to have any chance in the region, they must target states in the Deep South where fewer white votes are necessary for victory, especially Arkansas and Georgia, which along with Tennessee are the three southern states where Carter received white majorities in 1976 (Black and Black 1992, 334-335, 360-362).

The 1992 Presidential Contest

The Nomination Phase. Clinton secured the Democratic presidential nomination through sheer tenacity coupled with several lucky circumstances. Clinton’s first good fortune concerned his potential rivals for the Democratic nomination. With George Bush rated the most able president in the history of public opinion polling (89 percent approved of his handling of the presidency in a Gallup Poll conducted on 28 February-3 March 1991, during the Gulf War), potential “big name” Democratic rivals opted out of the presidential contest. Apparently, the fact that Bush’s approval rating was limited to foreign affairs *vis-à-vis* the economy (only 51 percent approval) escaped attention. By 3-6 January 1992, too late to enter the campaign,

Bush's overall approval rating had eroded to 46 percent, that for his handling the economy to 24 percent (Gallup 1992, 43-44). When Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder withdrew from the contest on 8 January 1992, Clinton was left with four white rivals with limited voter appeal: former California Governor Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., U.S. Senators Thomas R. Harkin (Iowa) and J.R. "Bob" Kerrey (Nebraska), and former U.S. Senator Paul E. Tsongas of Massachusetts (see Hadley and Stanley 1993, 31-32).³

Clinton's second good fortune was the election calendar and, ironically, the Gennifer Flowers incident that broke several weeks before the Iowa caucuses. The story of Clinton's alleged extramarital affair with Flowers published in the 21 January 1992 edition of the tabloid *Star* did not sink Clinton's ship the way the Donna Rice infidelity incident did U.S. Senator Gary Hart in 1988 for a number of reasons. First, the news media appeared to have changed the ground rules of reporting, leaving the burden of proof with the accuser. Second, and equally if not more important, the filing deadline already had passed in 15 states with 28 percent of the Democratic National Convention delegates. Third, the Gennifer Flowers incident was an ironic plus for Clinton because it separated him from the pack; it gave him instant name recognition (86 percent among Democrats and those leaning Democratic) and propelled him to first place in Gallup trial heats (with 42 percent to runner-up Jerry Brown's 16 percent) among those stating Democratic voting preferences between 3 January 1992, and 31 January-2 February 1992 (Hugick 1992c, 25-26). Fourth, New Hampshire voters, at that point, were more concerned about the health of the economy. Even when the accusation of Clinton's draft evasion during the Vietnam War came to public attention on 12 February 1992, the filing deadline already had passed in 18 states with 40 percent of the delegates (see Hadley and Stanley 1993, 33-34).

With respect to the delegate selection process itself, Harkin's native-son advantage caused every Democrat except him to skip the Iowa caucuses. While the New Hampshire primary favored Tsongas of neighboring Massachusetts, Clinton came in second with 25 percent of the vote to Tsongas' 33 percent, earning the label "Comeback Kid." The next several contests proved to be an indecisive muddle among Brown, Clinton, and Tsongas (which nevertheless forced Kerrey out of the race); the only decisive contest was that in Georgia, where Clinton bested Tsongas 57 to 24 percent. Heading into Super Tuesday, Clinton widened his previous victory margin over Tsongas to 63 versus 19 percent in the South Carolina primary, prompting the badly trailing Harkin to withdraw from the race. Clinton then solidified his grip on the Democratic nomination on Super Tuesday in the southern

states,⁴ where his margins of victory ranged from 52 percent (Florida) to 73 percent (Mississippi) of the vote. The much smaller Super Tuesday appeared to have worked in that it favored moderate, centrist native son Clinton (Stanley and Hadley 1987; Hadley and Stanley 1989): when Super Tuesday votes were aggregated, Clinton emerged a clear winner with 54 percent to Tsongas' 28 percent and Brown's 11 percent, although Tsongas secured impressive victories in native Massachusetts and neighboring Rhode Island (see Hadley and Stanley 1993, 34-36). While Tsongas hung on through the next two contests (Illinois and Michigan) before dropping out and Brown stayed until the end, the Democratic nomination belonged to Clinton, who, from available evidence, won the primary elections in the South with the support of a bi-racial voter coalition composed of three quarters or more of the black participants and just over half of the whites (Toner 1992, A12; Rosenbaum 1992, A10). The primaries themselves were low turnout contests that attracted the participation of approximately only 18.3 percent of the voting age population.⁵

Were it not enough to have to contend with Brown through the end of the national convention delegate selection process, Clinton, like Bush, had to look over his shoulder at another fellow southerner, folksy self-made billionaire H. Ross Perot of Texas, who joined the fray in March. While Perot never formalized his 'Put America First' independent candidacy for president, he certainly captured the attention of the American public, perhaps because of his unorthodox campaigning as a talk show guest, perhaps because of his promise to spend what it would take for a first class campaign were his name placed on the ballot in all 50 states (it was), perhaps because of his focus on the ailing economy, perhaps because of the sheer novelty of his campaign, or some combination thereof. By 7-10 May 1992, Perot had edged ahead of Clinton in the three-way Gallup Poll presidential trial heats. By 4-5 June 1992, Perot moved into the lead with 35 percent to Bush's 33 percent and Clinton's 25 percent. Immediately before the Democratic National Convention, however, the three-way contest tightened with Bush back in the lead with 35 percent to 30 percent for Perot and 28 percent for Clinton (Newport and Gallup 1992, 15, 20; see also Hadley and Stanley 1993, 40-43; Stanley 1994.)

The General Election. Good fortune continued to smile on Clinton. During the interval between the last primary elections (2 June 1992) and the Democratic National Convention (13-16 July 1992), an embattled Clinton and his advisors took advantage of the information gleaned from focus groups to shape his image, as his advisors learned that the general American public still knew little about Clinton, other than his name. The American public grew to "know" Clinton at the Democratic National Convention.

Clinton was a poor, working class boy who made good—going from losing his father at birth, contending with an alcoholic stepfather, working his way through school at Georgetown University to his Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford and Yale Law School, and his election as governor of Arkansas for multiple terms. Too, he signaled a battle for southern Electoral College votes by selecting a seasoned campaigner from his own generation, center-left U.S. Senator Al Gore (Tennessee), as his vice presidential running mate. Finally, on the very eve of Clinton's convention acceptance speech, Perot dropped out of the contest he never formally had entered—an action that catapulted Clinton ahead of Bush by a 56 to 34 percent margin in the 16-17 July 1992 Gallup Poll presidential trial heats, a margin that held through the 17 August 1992 Republican National Convention (Newport and McAneny 1992, 31-33; Hugick 1992a, 11-21; Hadley and Stanley 1993, 42-44).

Having won the Democratic nomination with a big boost from voters in the southern states and having formed an all-South presidential ticket to do battle with incumbent Republicans Bush and Quayle in their party's regional stronghold (Black and Black 1992), Clinton focused his campaign strategy on winning only five of the eleven southern states. Based on a division of the country into three categories of states labelled "Top End" (strongly Democratic states earmarked for minimal expenditures to win), "Big Challenge" (write-offs earmarked for minimal campaign effort because of their tilt toward Republican presidential candidates), and "Play Hard" (competitive states earmarked for maximum campaign effort and expenditures), four southern states—Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee—were included in the "Play Hard" category, while Clinton's home state of Arkansas was included in the 13 "Top End" states (plus D.C.) that were taken for granted. Six southern states—Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia—were among the 19 "Big Challenge" states earmarked for minimal campaign effort (Crotty 1993, 10-11; Stanley 1994; cf. Arterton 1993, 87-88).

While the Clinton-Gore campaign focused on the four "Play Hard" states in the South, it also ventured into Florida and Texas if only to force the Republican team of Bush and Quayle to defend its turf, at the cost of much valuable time, effort, and resources (Arterton 1993, 87). Initially, Perot had a negligible impact when he "officially" entered the presidential campaign on 1 October 1992.⁶ were the election held 28-30 September 1992, Clinton was ahead of Bush 54 to 38 percent in a head-to-head contest, and by 52 to 35 percent in a three-way contest in which Perot received the support of but 7 percent (Hugick 1992b, 2-3). Immediately prior to the presidential election, the Gallup Poll predicted vote shares of 49, 37, and

14 percent for Clinton, Bush, and Perot, respectively. However, Bush had rebounded to a 45 to 38 percent lead over Clinton (Perot trailed at 13 percent) *in the South*, which was Bush's strongest regional support by far, inasmuch as the percentages were reversed in Clinton's favor in the remaining three regions (Gallup and Saad 1992).⁷ Perot, of course, served to keep voter attention focused on the economy and, consequently, on Bush and his presidency.

In the ultimate poll, the 2 November 1992 balloting, Clinton, Bush, and Perot received 43.0, 37.4, and 18.9 percent, respectively, of the votes cast in an election attracting the highest voter turnout (55.9 percent) since the 1968 three-way contest among Democrat Hubert H. Humphrey, Republican Richard M. Nixon, and American Independent Party candidate George C. Wallace of Alabama. Translated into Electoral College votes, Clinton was elected with 370 votes to Bush's 168, while Perot was shut out. It was the first successful all-South ticket to win the presidency since 1828, and the first Democratic ticket elected without Texas since the latter became a state (Cook 1992, 3548).

Nevertheless, in the South, Clinton prevailed only in his home state and in the targeted states of Louisiana, Georgia, and Tennessee (Gore's home state), while losing the targeted state of North Carolina along with the six "Big Challenge" states of the South. Indeed, the South overall was the strongest region for Bush (43 percent to Clinton's 41 and Perot's 16 percent), and the weakest region for Perot (Stanley 1994, especially Table 14.2; cf. Cook 1992, 3550). With a turnout rate of only 50.8 percent in the region (Eiland 1993),⁸ southern whites cast only one-third of their votes for the Democratic ticket, in contrast to blacks, who cast over 80 percent of theirs for Clinton and Gore (Voter Research and Surveys 1992). However, Clinton and Gore ran well enough in the rest of the country to win in the Electoral College *even without* the four southern states they carried.

Southern Politics After Clinton

Where does the 1992 presidential election leave southern politics, given the election of the Democratic Clinton-Gore ticket? Comparing Clinton's voter support with that of other Democrats who ran statewide for governor or U.S. Senator, Clinton ran behind every candidate for statewide office on southern ballots in 1992, sometimes substantially so (see Table 2). U.S. Senator Richard C. Shelby (Alabama) received 66 percent of the votes cast to Clinton's 41 percent; U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers (Arkansas) led Clinton by 60 to 54 percent; U.S. Senator Bob Graham (Florida) led 66 to 39 percent; U.S. Senator Wyche Fowler, Jr. led 49 to 44 percent; Governor

Table 2. Democratic Votes Cast for President, U.S. Senator, and Governor, Southern States, 1992, 1976, and 1968 (in hundred thousands)

	1992		1976		1968	
	Clinton	Governor/ U.S. Senator ^a	Carter	Governor/ U.S. Senator	Humphrey	Governor/ U.S. Senator
Alabama	687 (41%)	1,017 (S 66%)	659 (56%)		*197 (19%)	639 (S 70%)
Arkansas	499 (54%)	545 (S 60%)	499 (65%)	727 (G 83%)	*188 (30%)	350 (S 59%)
Florida	2,051 (39%)	3,214 (S 66%)	1,636 (52%)	1,800 (S 63%)	677 (31%)	893 (S 44%)
Georgia	1,006 (44%)	1,099 (S 49%)	979 (67%)		*334 (27%)	
Louisiana	815 (46%)		661 (52%)		*310 (28%)	
Mississippi	393 (41%)		381 (50%)		*151 (23%)	316 (G 70%)
North Carolina	1,104 (43%)	1,353 (G 53%)	927 (55%)	1,664 (G 65%)	464 (29%)	870 (S 61%)
South Carolina	477 (40%)	579 (S 51%)	451 (56%)		197 (30%)	404 (S 62%)
Tennessee	934 (47%)		826 (56%)	751 (S 53%)	351 (28%)	
Texas	2,279 (37%)		2,082 (51%)	2,200 (S 53%)	1,267 (41%)	1,663 (G 57%)
Virginia	1,035 (41%)		814 (48%)	596 (S 43%)	442 (33%)	

Bold italics indicate that the Democratic presidential candidate won the Electoral College vote in these states.

*The American Independent Party (AIP) presidential candidate Alabama Governor George C. Wallace won the Electoral College vote in these states.

^aS = U.S. Senator; G = Governor.

Sources: Election '92 Results, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 7 November 1992: 3600-3607; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1978* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), pp. 506, 509, and 517; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1974* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 424, 427, and 434.

James B. Hunt, Jr. (North Carolina) led 53 to 43 percent; and U.S. Senator Ernest F. Hollings (South Carolina) led Clinton by 51 to 40 percent. Admittedly, Clinton's vote share was depressed in part by running against two general election opponents, rather than one; however, the same pattern of presidential vote-getting was true during the 1976 presidential election. While Jimmy Carter prevailed in all of the southern states except Virginia, he ran behind far more popular Democratic candidates for statewide office in Arkansas, Florida, and North Carolina, as well as in Texas. Moreover, excluding the states won by American Independent candidate George Wallace in 1968, Democrat Hubert Humphrey ran behind more popular Democrats seeking statewide office in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

With voter turnout highest for presidential elections, it is important to note that presidential and other statewide contests either are independent from each other (e.g., Stanley 1988), or, alternatively, are dependent in a counter-intuitive direction (i.e., the coattails extend up, rather than down, the ticket). There is a strong possibility that the stronger statewide Democratic candidates helped secure the needed margin of victory in the South for the native southern presidential candidates in 1992 and 1976, especially outside of the presidential candidates' home states. While the 1976 Tennessee and Virginia elections provide evidence to support Stanley, the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign in the South proved the reverse. Candidates and elected officials from all levels of government eagerly cooperated with the Democratic team on its very popular campaign bus swings through the region; they were very willing to be seen and photographed with Clinton and Gore, in marked contrast to the distance they had put between themselves and Dukakis (e.g., Hadley 1994). Southern candidates, moreover, were among the principals in the 1992, 1976, and 1968 elections. In 1992, Clinton and Gore, President Bush, and Ross Perot all were from southern states. In 1976, of course, Jimmy Carter only won the election with the massive support of his native South. In 1968, Alabama Governor George C. Wallace was the independent candidate; the rest of the general election field was from outside the region.

The two three-way contests, 1992 and 1968, ranked third (19.0 percent) and sixth (13.5 percent), respectively, in American electoral history in terms of the vote share won by independent candidates for president. Both Perot and Wallace were native southerners, as noted above; however, the voter support each garnered in the region differed greatly. With the exception of the regional megastates, Florida and Texas, Perot ran worse in the South than he did in the nation, as shown in Table 3. Wallace did just the opposite, he won the Electoral College votes of five southern states—

Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi—and ran substantially stronger in every one of the southern states than he did in the nation, as shown in Table 3. Perot, in other words, demonstrated broad voter appeal, whereas Wallace did not. Perot, moreover, had to compete against fellow southerners at the top of both major party tickets, one of which was advantaged further by native son Al Gore’s presence as the vice presidential running mate.

Finally, in 1992, Bush exceeded his national vote share (37 percent) in every southern state except Clinton’s Arkansas, while the Clinton-Gore ticket ran ahead of its national vote share in only two southern states (Georgia and Louisiana) other than the candidates’ respective home states. The best Nixon had done in the region in 1968 was to equal his average national vote in Virginia; his opponent, Humphrey, only came close to his average national vote in Texas (41 percent versus 43 percent nationally), the only southern state he won.

Table 3. Voter Support for Presidential Candidates, Southern States, 1992 and 1968 (in percentages)

	1992			1968		
	Clinton	Bush	Perot	Wallace	Nixon	Humphrey
Alabama	41	48	11	66	14	19
Arkansas	54	36	11	39	31	30
Florida	39	41	20	29	41	31
Georgia	44	43	13	43	30	27
Louisiana	46	42	12	48	24	28
Mississippi	41	50	09	64	14	23
North Carolina	43	44	14	31	40	29
South Carolina	40	48	12	32	38	30
Tennessee	47	43	10	34	38	28
Texas	37	40	22	19	40	41
Virginia	41	45	14	24	43	33
Nationwide	43	38	19	14	43	43

Sources: State-by-State Tally, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, 7 November 1992: 3552; John L. Moore, ed., *Congressional Quarterly’s Guide to U.S. Elections*, 2nd Edition (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1985): 362.

The 1992 election, moreover, continues a three decade movement in the South from Democrats to Republicans in both houses of Congress, as shown in Table 4. In 1962, overwhelming numbers of U.S. Senators (95 percent) and Representatives (90 percent) from the South were Democrats. By 1972, the Democratic proportion of the southern delegations had fallen to about two-thirds, the Senate falling further to an equal division between the parties in 1980. As a result of the 1992 elections, the Republican party gained two Senators and nine members of the expanded southern House of Representatives delegation, although many of the contests were decided by the presidential general election. Over the 1962-1992 period, Republican gains were greater in the Rim South than Deep South states, the subregional distinction nearly being erased for the House of Representatives delegations in the 1992 elections.

While it remains a challenge for Republicans in the South to exceed the gains in congressional seats they attained in years when Ronald Reagan headed the Republican ticket, specifically 1980-1984, they have continued to gain seats in southern state legislatures. In 1992, Republicans added 31 seats in the lower chambers and 13 seats in the upper chambers of state legislatures to the totals they had won in 1988 (Stanley 1994, Table 14.4).

Conclusion

Where is the South after the election of President Bill Clinton? It has not changed: it continues to move toward the Republican party politically. This is evident in the pattern of presidential, congressional, and subnational voting returns in 1992, despite the Democrats' success at the top of the ticket. It is further evident when contrasted to the results of such races in earlier years.

On the other hand, the region remains very important for Democratic presidential hopefuls (especially southern ones) in the low-turnout presidential nomination process because of the strategic placement of individual and collective southern state delegate selection contests, including especially Super Tuesday.

The comparatively high-turnout general election is something else again; winning nomination with southern help and winning election with southern help are, as the 1992 data show, very different matters. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the Clinton-Gore example, Democrats still can win some southern states, especially their home states; moreover, Republican opponents can be forced to waste valuable time and effort and significant financial resources defending their southern stronghold.

Table 4. Distribution of Seats in Congress for Democrats, Deep South, Rim South, and South, 1962-1992 (in percentages)*

	'62	'64	'66	'68	'70	'72	'74	'76	'78	'80	'82	'84	'86	'88	'90	'92
Senate																
Deep South	100	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	80	60	60	60	80	70	70	60
Rim South	92	92	83	75	58	42	50	58	58	42	42	50	67	67	67	50
South	95	91	86	82	73	64	68	73	68	50	50	55	73	68	68	55
House of Representatives																
Deep South	100	81	84	84	81	72	78	78	69	67	73	69	72	69	75	64
Rim South	84	87	75	71	70	65	74	74	72	63	70	60	64	64	63	61
South	90	85	78	75	74	68	75	75	71	64	71	63	66	66	66	62

*The year is that in which Members of Congress are elected, e.g., those elected with the president in 1992 were seated in 1993. The Senate Ns for the Deep South, Rim South, and South are fixed at 10, 12, and 22, respectively; the House of Representatives Ns for the Deep South, Rim South, and South change with each census enumeration: for 1962 - 37, 69, and 106; for 1972 - 36, 72, and 108; for 1982 - 36, 80, 116; and for 1992 - 36, 89, and 125.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1964* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964): 377; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1970* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1970): 359; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1974* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974): 432; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1979* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979): 508; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1986* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986): 248; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1992* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992): 263; and, "Senate Membership-103rd Congress" and "House Makeup, Party Gains and Losses," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 7, 1992: 3558, 3571.

In the final analysis, presidential elections and those for offices below that level appear to have different dynamics, especially since Republican candidates continued to gain seats in southern congressional delegations and in southern state legislatures, regardless of how closely Democratic candidates tied themselves to Clinton and Gore. Admittedly, Clinton's performance in office should add yet another dynamic to southern election contests in the near-future. Nevertheless, one thing seems clear, at this writing: Republican candidates will continue to gain ground in the region while Clinton is in the White House, and after he returns home to Arkansas.

NOTES

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¹The 1986 voter registration numbers for the southern states are the latest available at this writing.

²Those voting Republican for presidential candidates are inhibited from doing the same for Members of Congress until Republican candidates contest those elections. For data through 1984, see Broder (1985, A1, A10).

³Those who announced their decision not to contest the Democratic nomination included U.S. Senators Al Gore (Tennessee) and John D. Rockefeller IV (West Virginia); former U.S. Senator George McGovern (South Dakota); U.S. Representatives Richard A. Gephardt (Missouri) and Dave McCurdy (Oklahoma); Governor Mario M. Cuomo (New York); and Reverend Jesse L. Jackson (Washington, D.C.).

⁴The number of southern states was reduced by five; Georgia moved its contest up a week and Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Virginia moved their contests from the first Tuesday in March to dates from early April to very early June (*Congressional Quarterly* 1992, 259). South Carolina, moreover, held its delegate selection contest on the Saturday before Super Tuesday, as it did in 1988.

⁵From an estimated voting age population (VAP) total of 49,409,000 for the southern states (excluding the 4,842,000 VAP of Virginia, which held caucuses), 9,049,777 participated in the Democratic and Republican primary elections. Calculated from the estimated 1992 voting age population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1992) and primary vote totals reported to the Federal Election Commission (Klein 1992).

⁶For a chronology of Perot activities, see Feigert (1993, 79).

⁷The Gallup Poll includes Kentucky and Oklahoma in its South.

⁸Votes were cast by 27,532,950 individuals in the 11 southern states, based on calculations from figures reported to the Federal Election Commission.

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