



The Current Political Environment in North Carolina

NCACC

August 24, 2023

Chris Cooper

Madison Distinguished Professor

Western Carolina University

Rough Plan

- Purple NC
- Purple is a Mix of Red and Blue
- Voter Turnout
- This legislative session
 - With a brief detour on the veto & gubernatorial power (don't worry—we'll pull back into the flow of traffic)

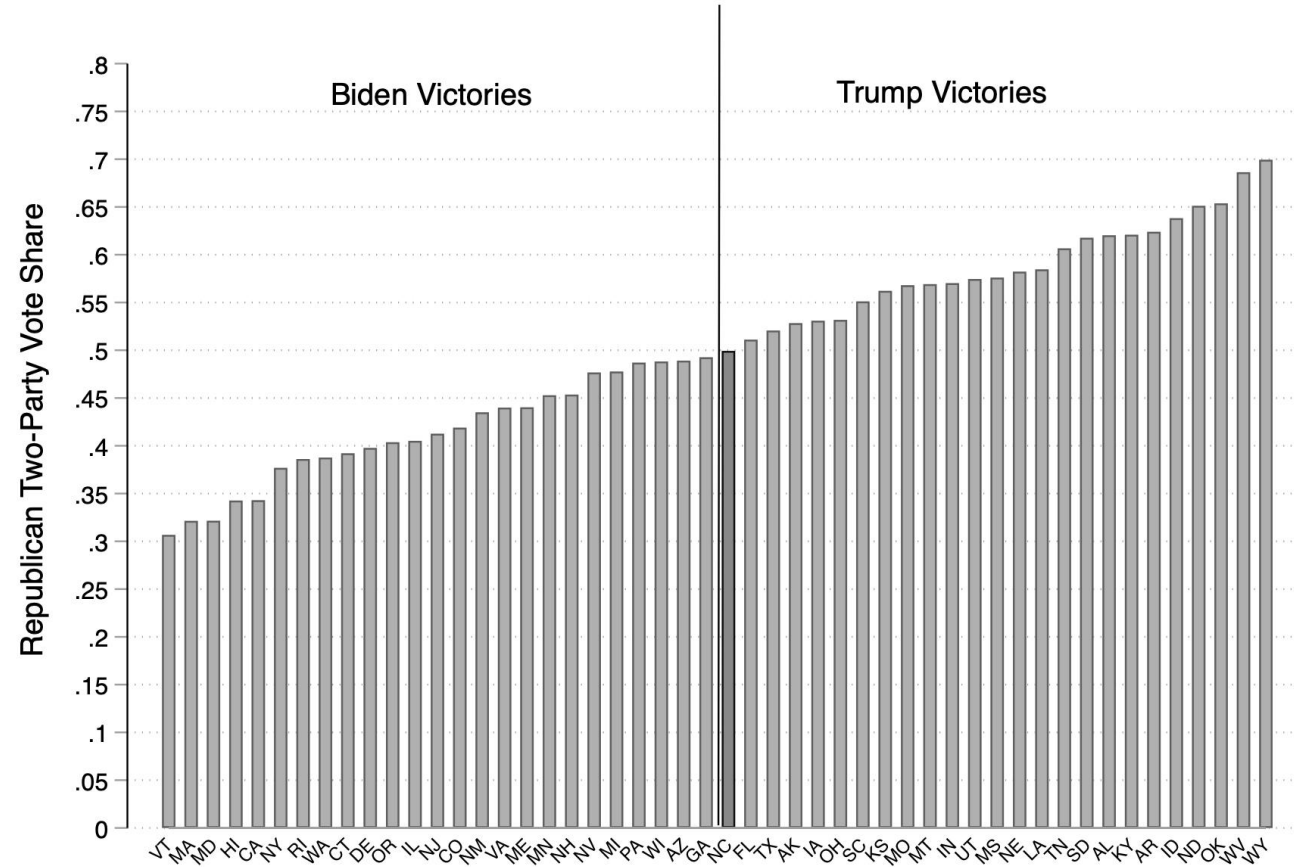
Biden campaign invests \$25 million in North Carolina and other battleground states

BY DANIELLE BATTAGLIA

UPDATED AUGUST 21, 2023 8:49 AM



Purple North Carolina

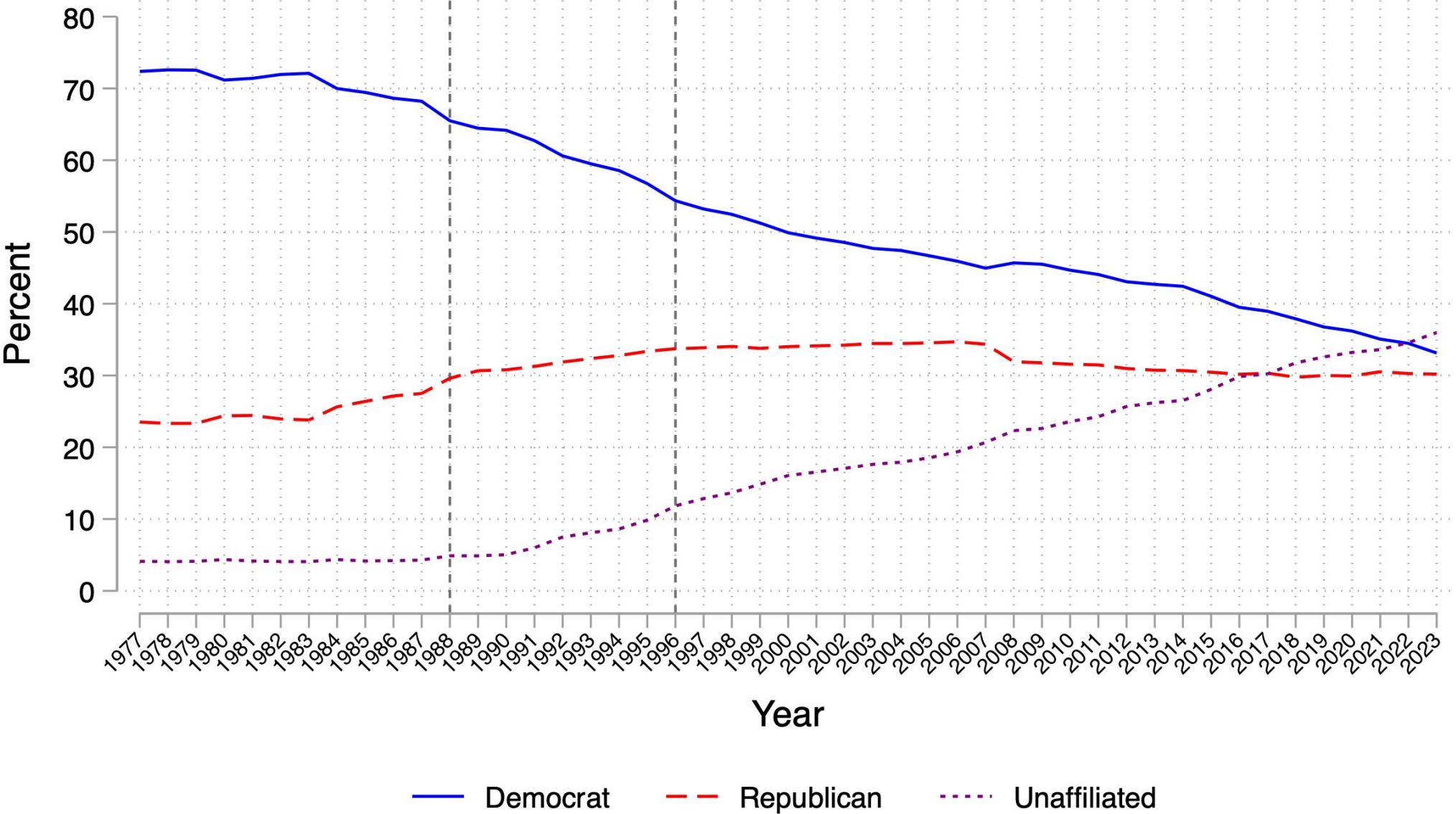


Purple North Carolina



Data Source: David Liep's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections

Party Registration in North Carolina 1977-2023



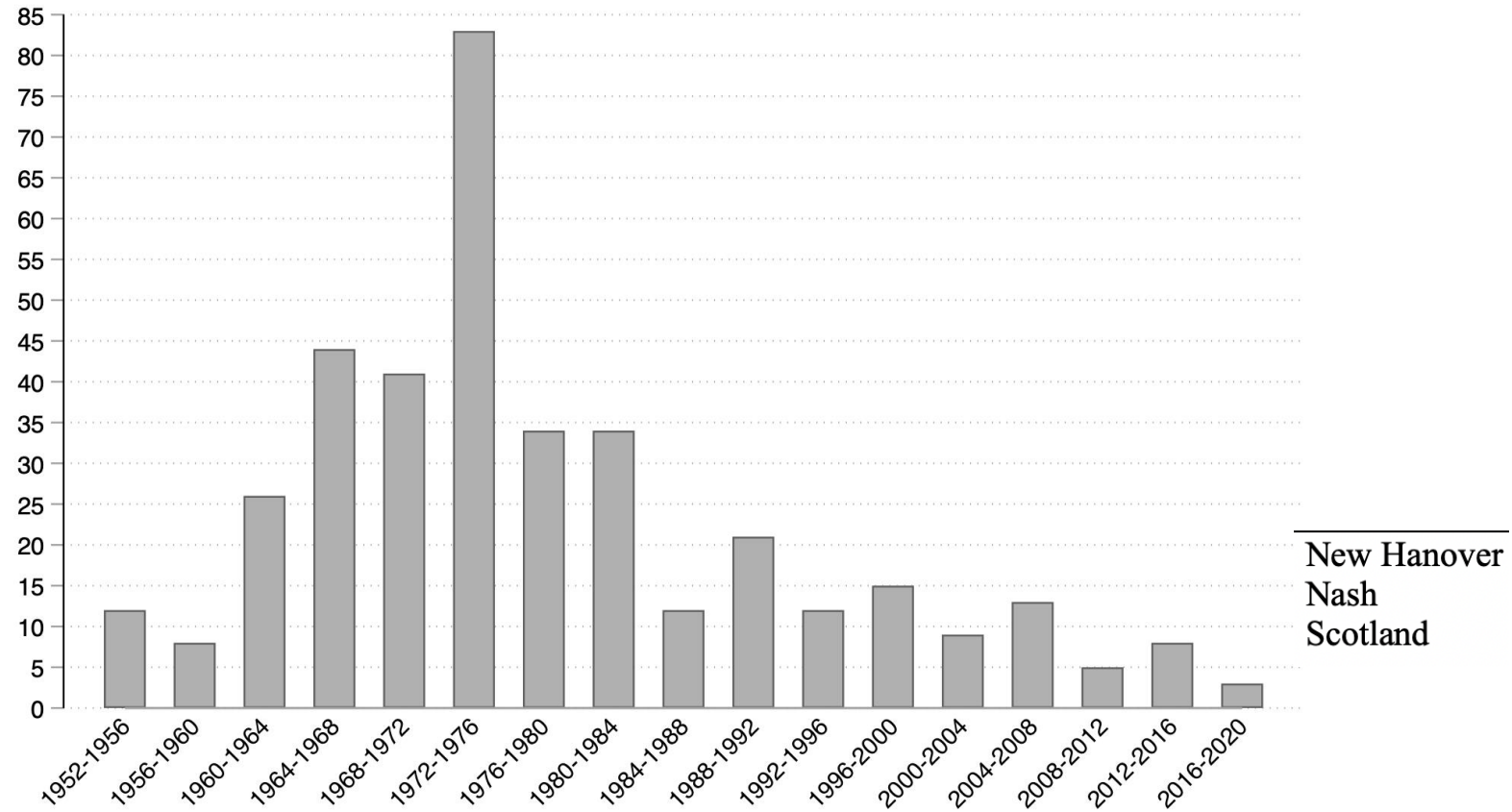
Notes: Data from NCSBE & NC Manual. Graph by Chris Cooper.

Vertical lines indicate when Republicans & then Democrats opened their primaries to Unaffiliated Voters.

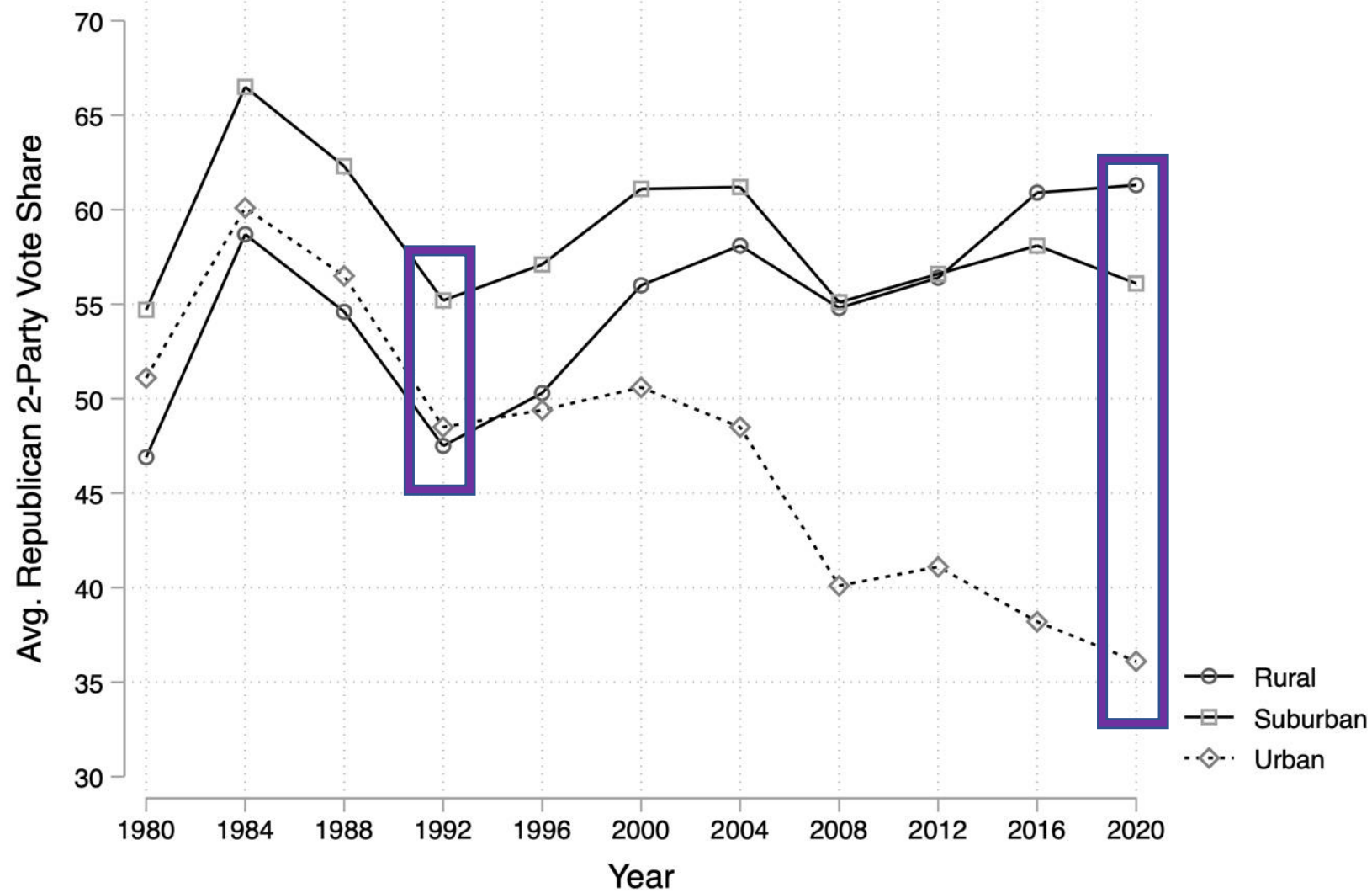
In Simple Terms

- Unaffiliated are the largest group of registered voters under 40 years old
- Unaffiliated are the smallest group of registered voters over 40 years old
- Unaffiliated are the largest group of registered voters born outside NC
- Unaffiliated are the smallest group of registered voters under 40 years old

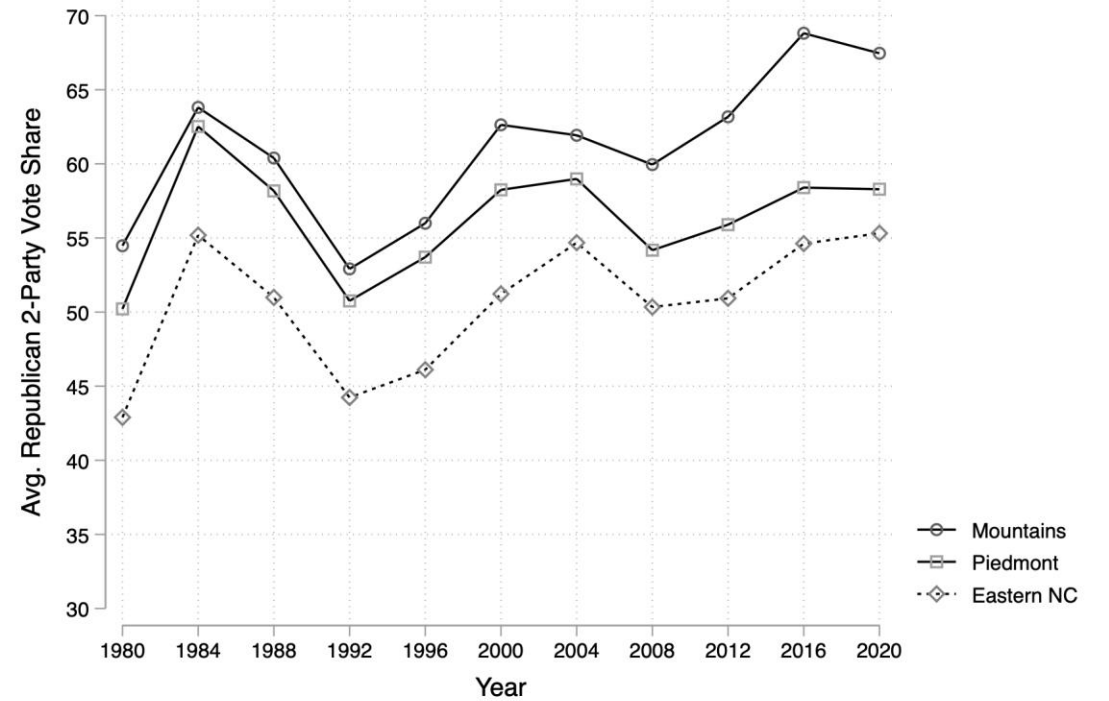
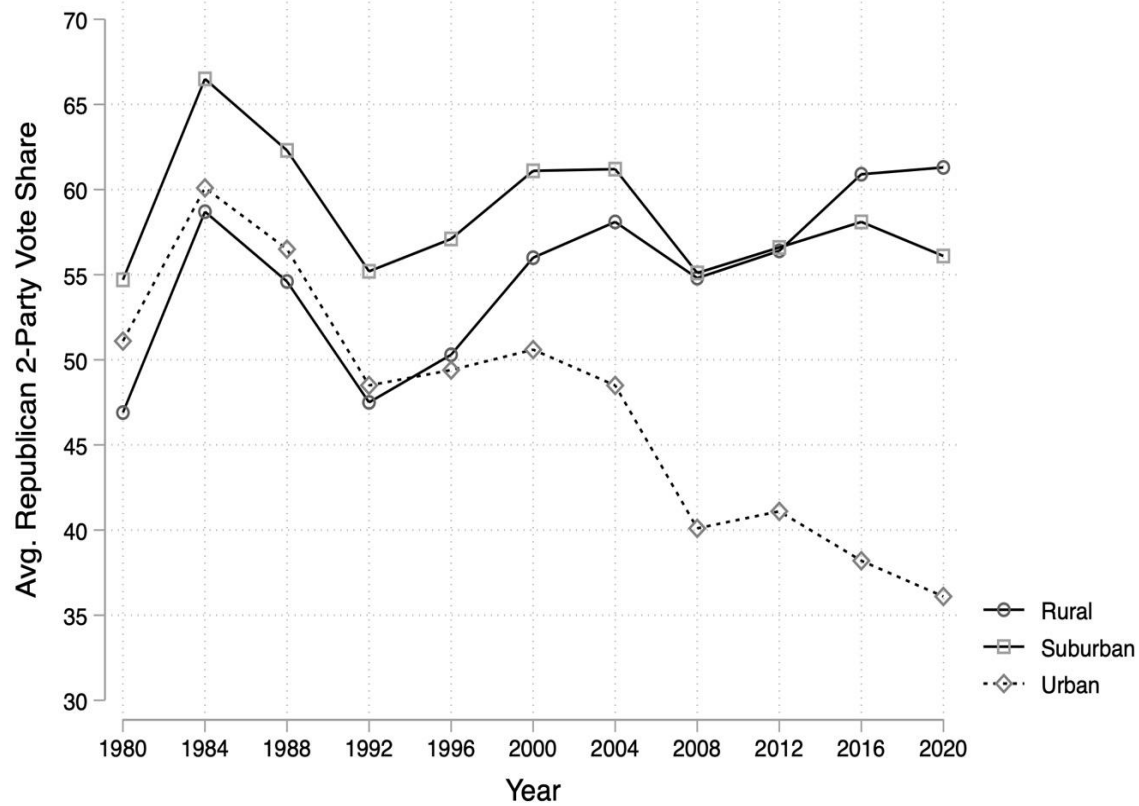
Purple is a Mix of Red & Blue: Decline in Swing Counties



Purple is a Mix of Red & Blue



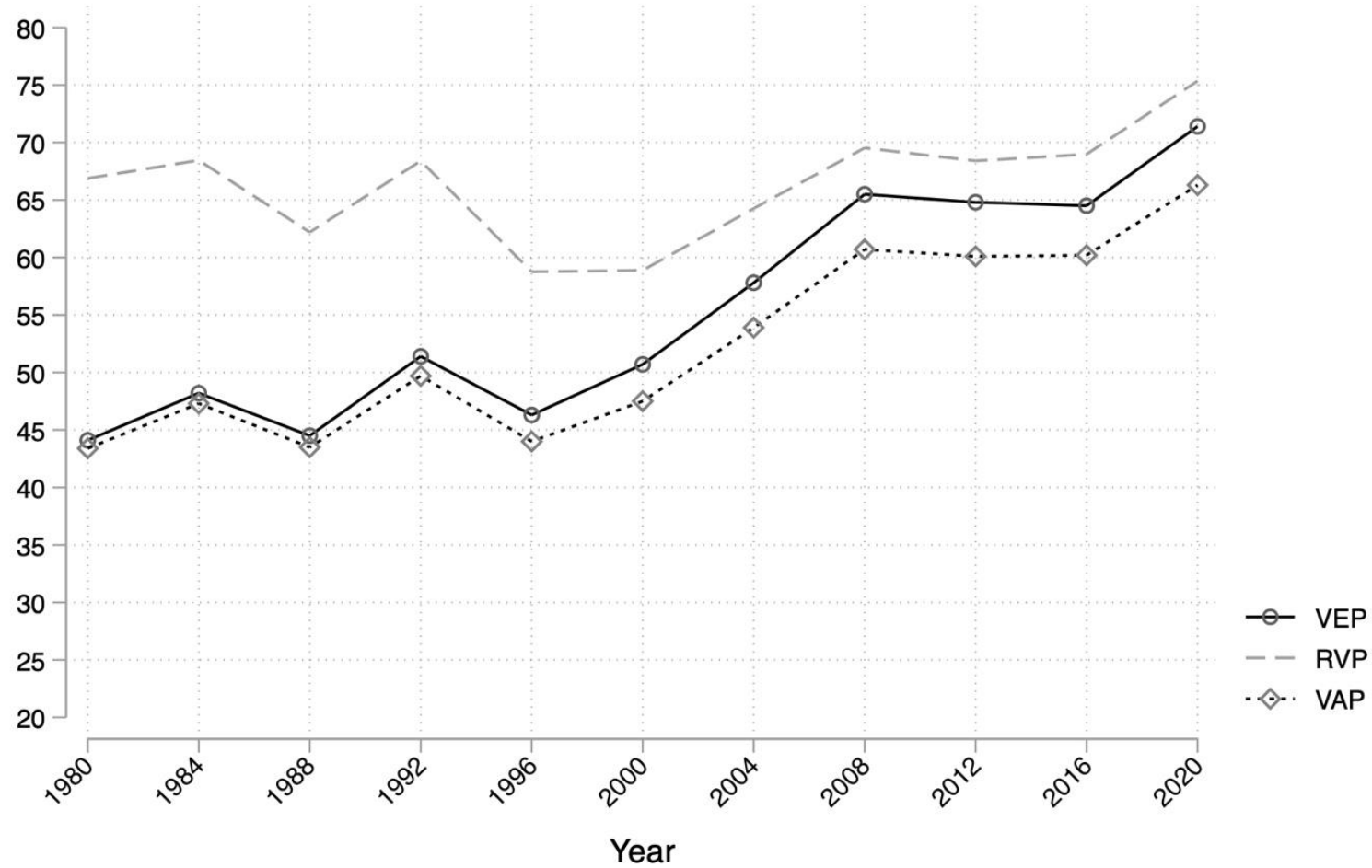
Rurality/Urbanity > Region



Within County Variation

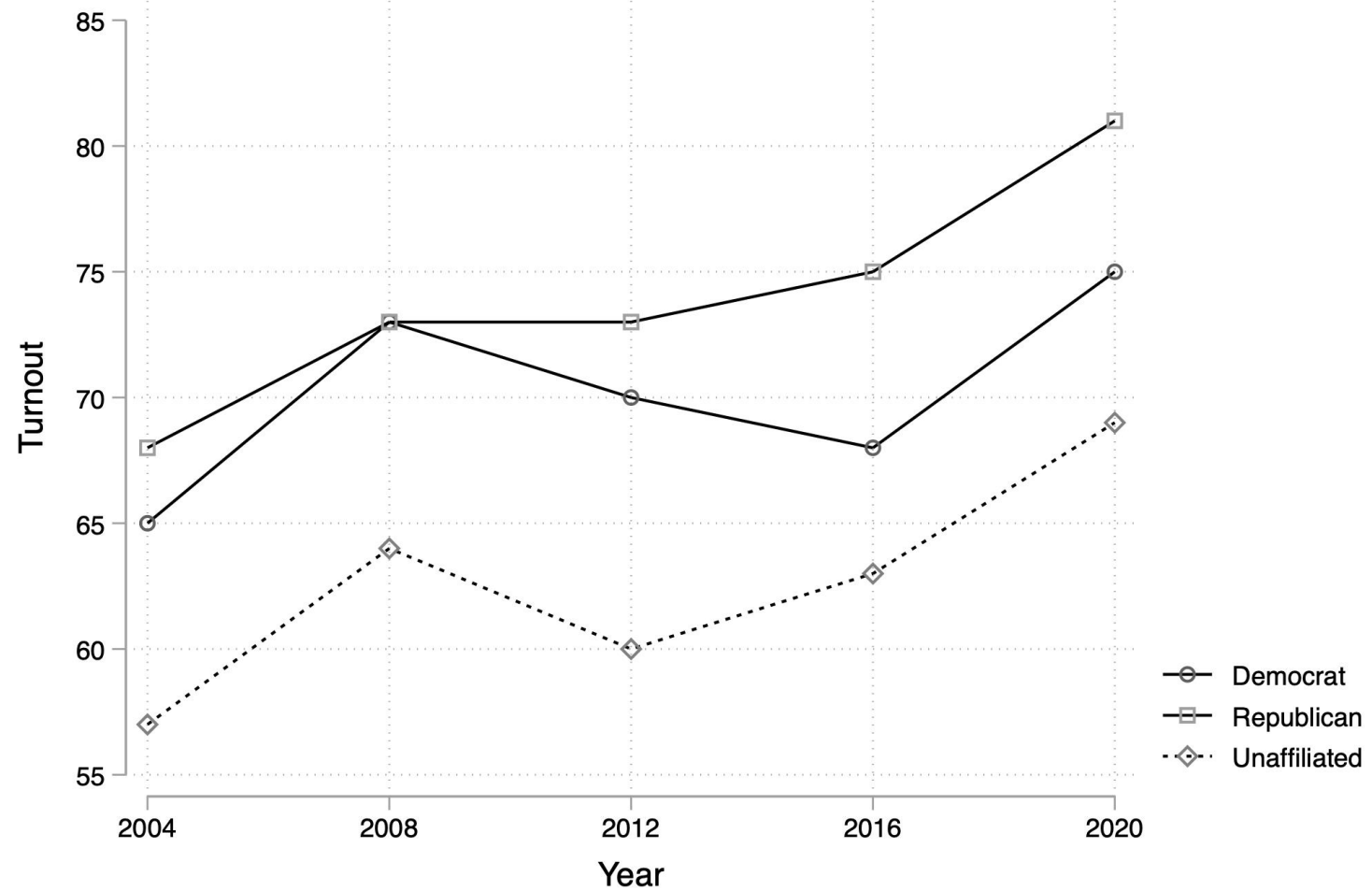
- Incorporated/Unincorporated: the new urban/rural divide
- Democrats are the largest group of registered voters in incorporated places
- Democrats are the smallest group of registered voters in unincorporated places

Voter Turnout

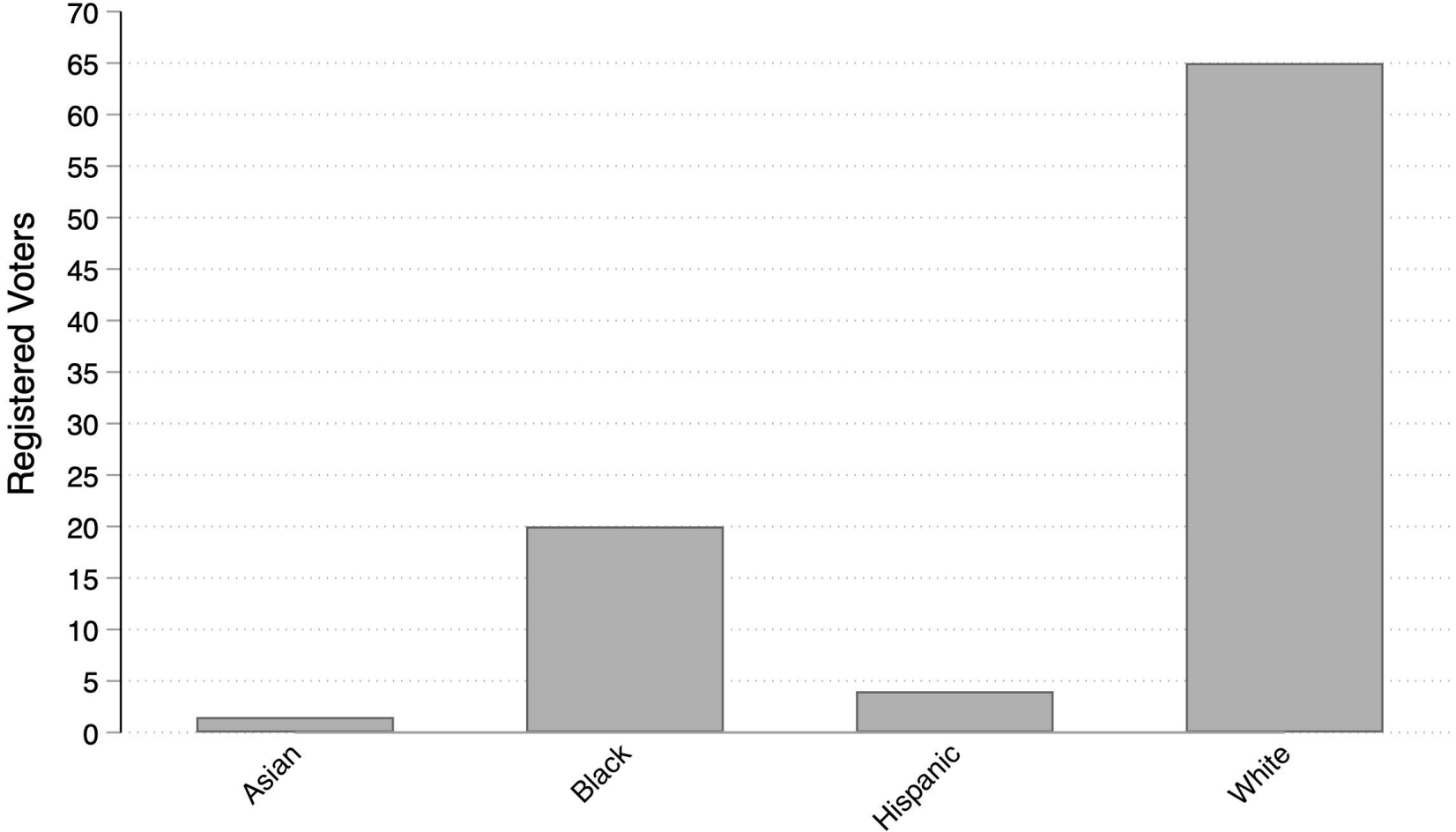


Note: VEP=Voter Eligible Percent Turnout; RVP=Registered Voter Percent Turnout; VAP=Voting Age Population Turnout

Voter Turnout

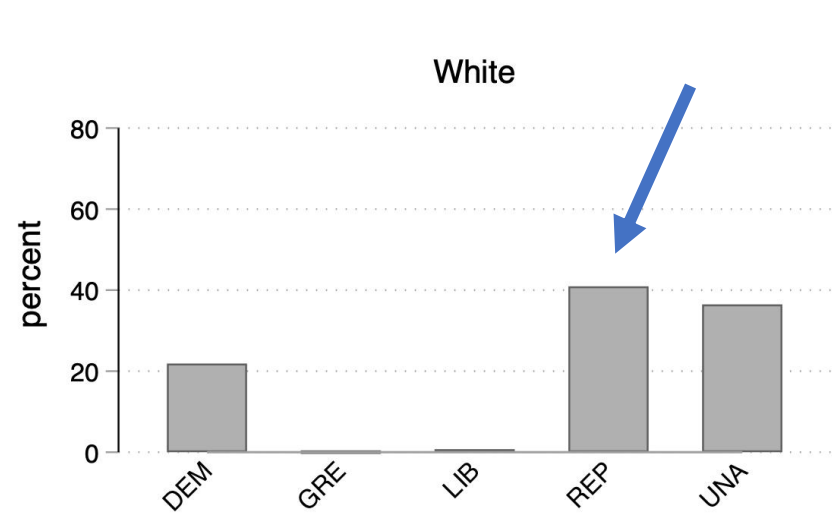
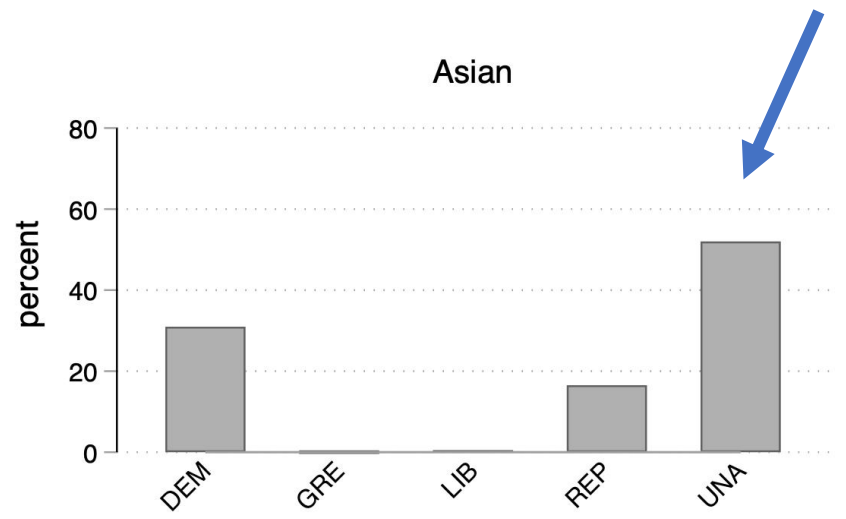
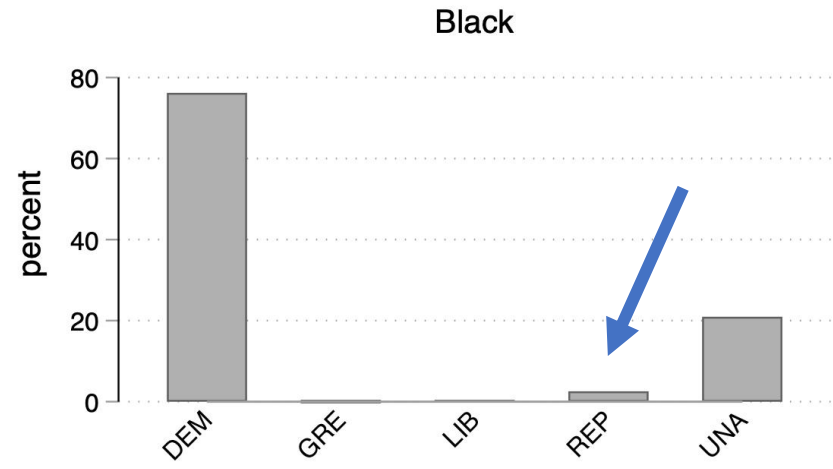
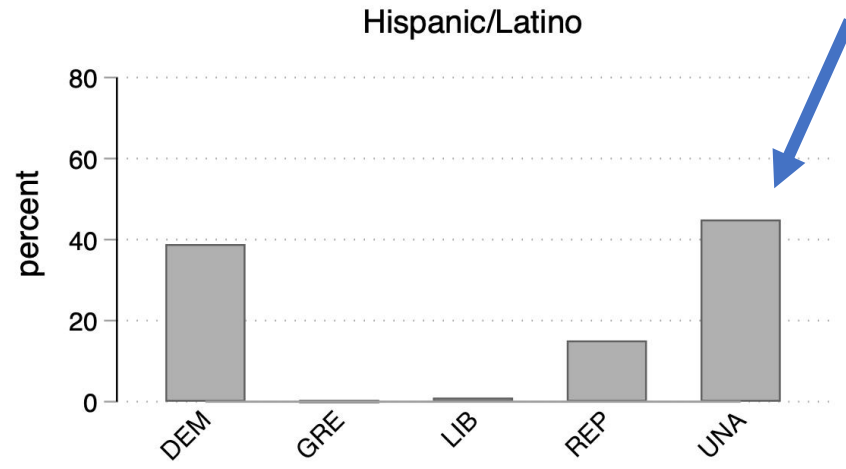


Percent of Registered Voters by Race/Ethnicity



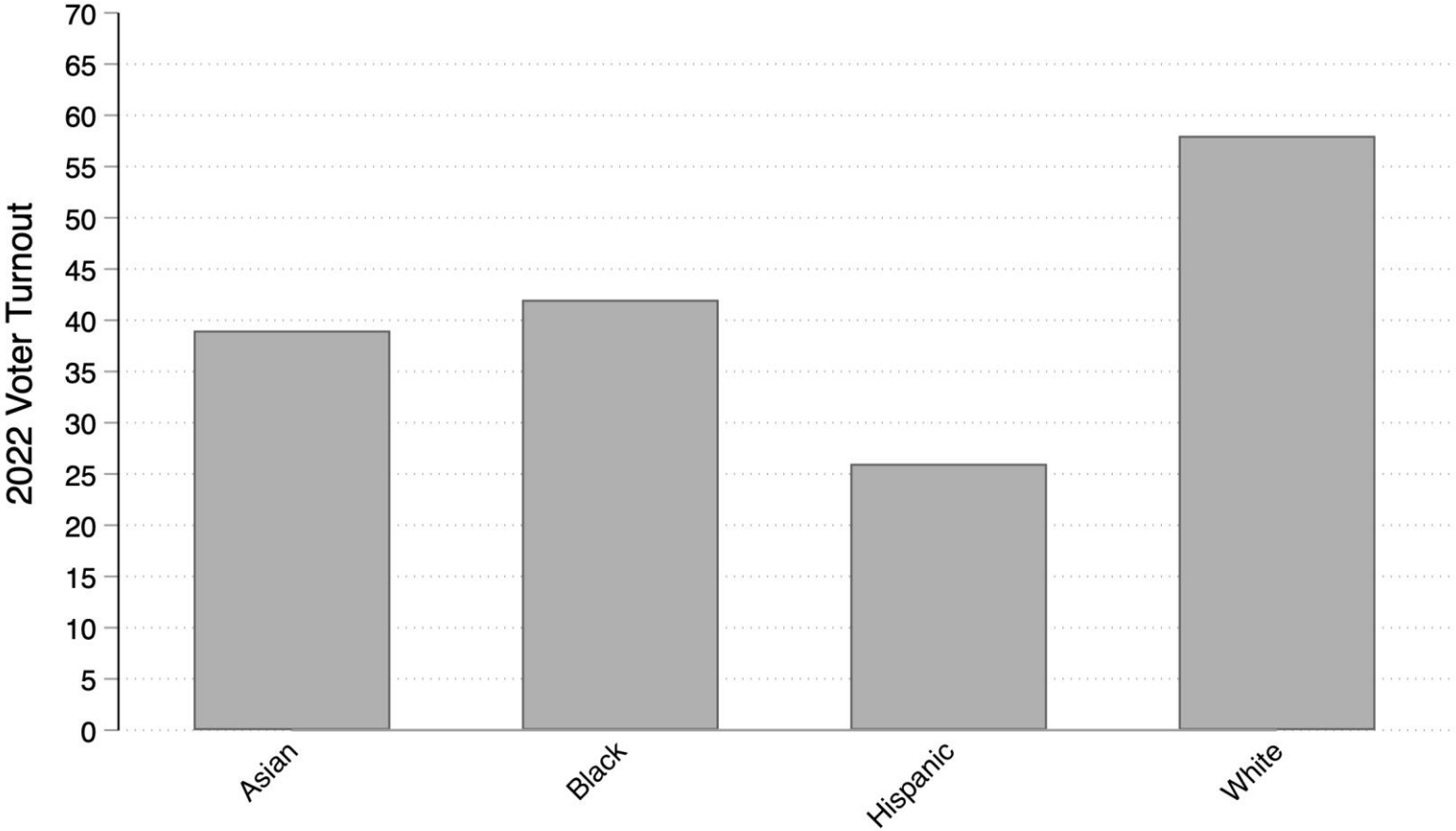
Data from NCSBE. Graph by Chris Cooper

Party ID by Racial/Ethnic Group



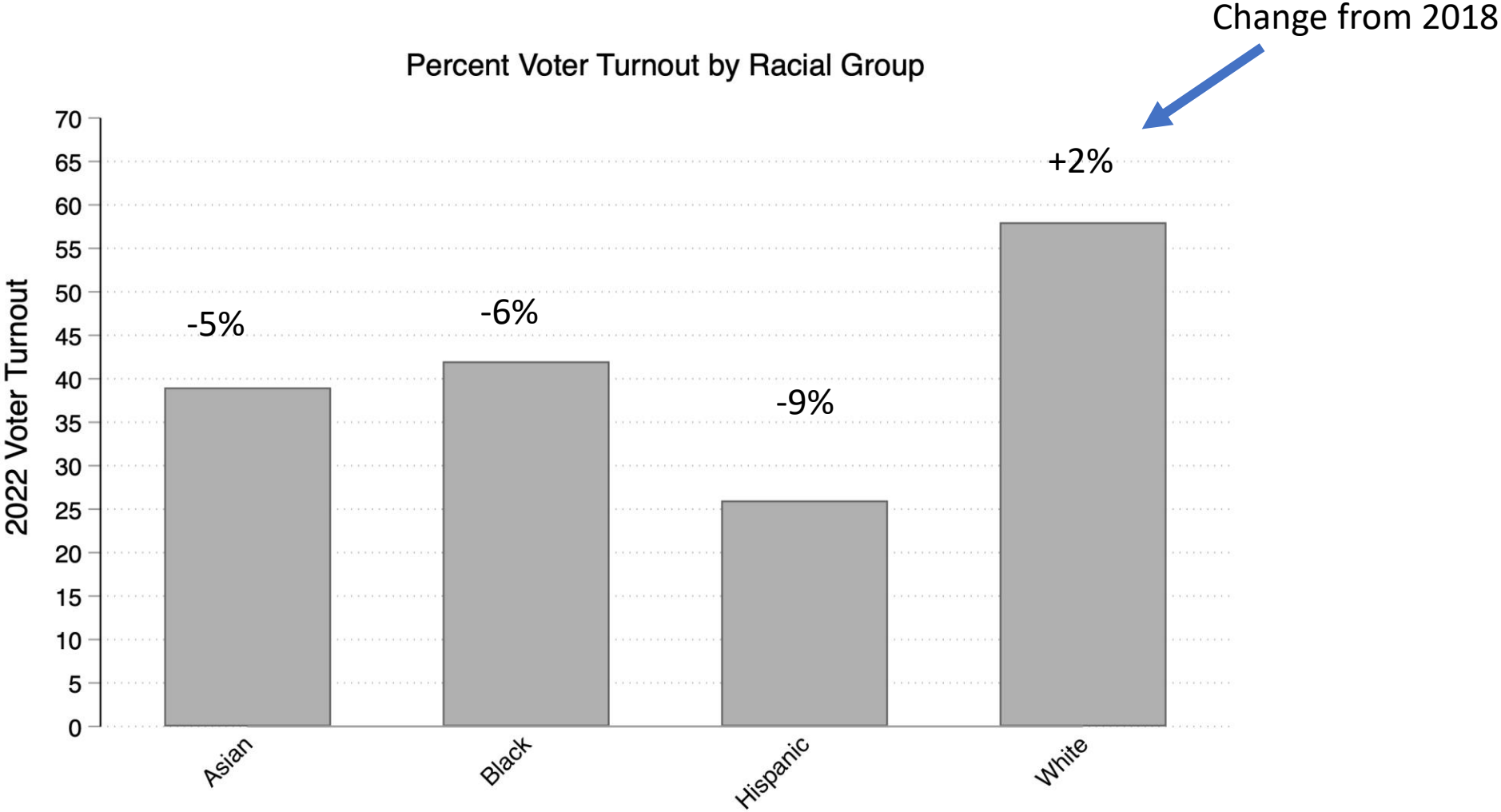
Data from Aug 5 2023 NC Voter Reg Database. Graph by Chris Cooper

Percent Voter Turnout by Racial Group



Data from NCSBE. Graph by Chris Cooper

Percent Voter Turnout by Racial Group

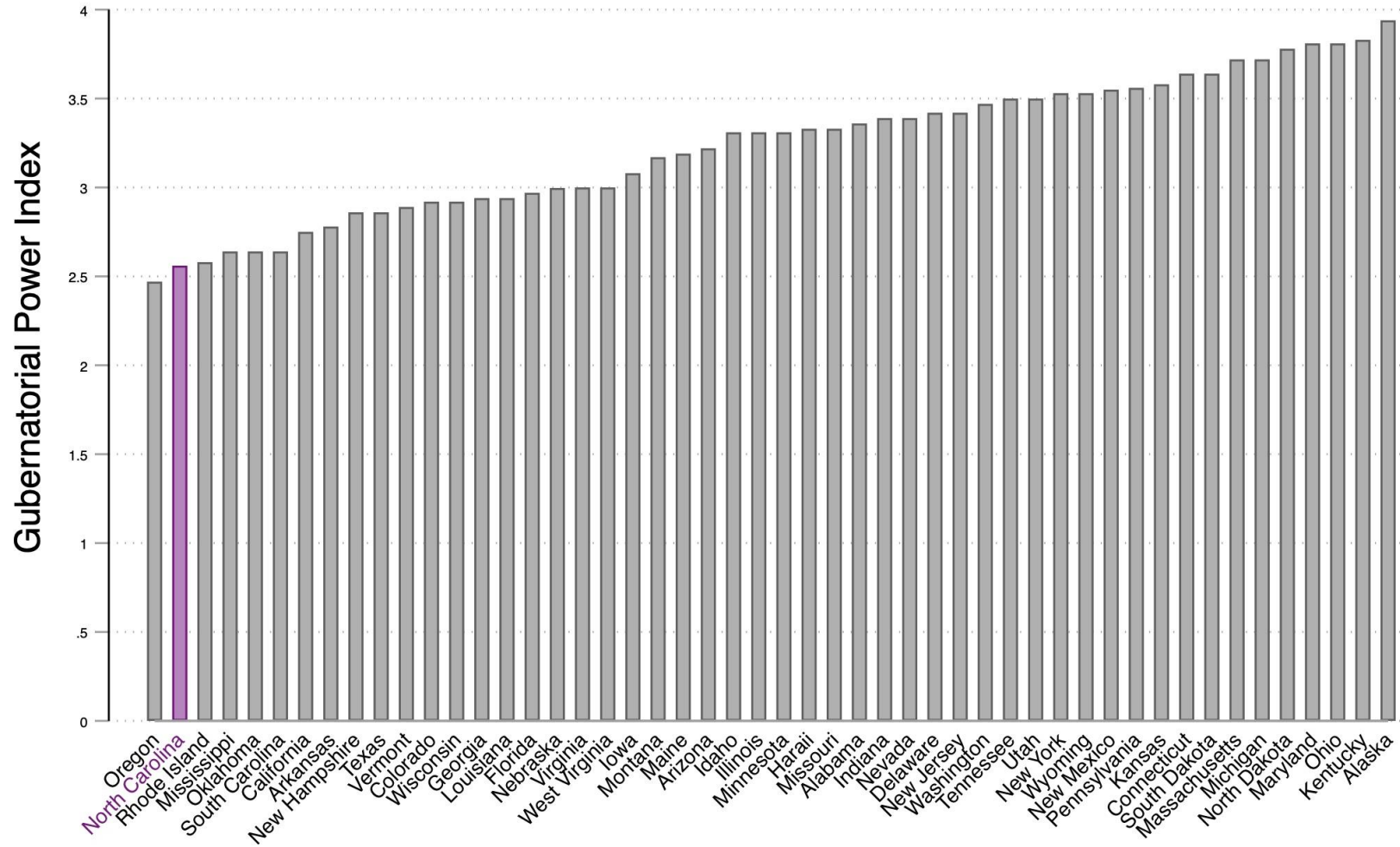


Data from NCSBE. Graph by Chris Cooper



Shifting Gears

Gubernatorial Institutional Power Rank 2015



And that was before this

NC governors, already among weakest in US, are on their way to becoming potted plants

BY ROB CHRISTENSEN

SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 10:16 PM, UPDATED SEPTEMBER 21, 2018 07:00 AM



And this

NC lawmakers pass bill that transfers some of the governor's powers to themselves

BY DAWN BAUMGARTNER VAUGHAN, ADAM WAGNER, AND KORIE DEAN

UPDATED AUGUST 16, 2023 8:29 PM



The Veto

1933

GUBERNATORIAL VETO ENDORSED

Di Passes Bill to Give Veto to
Governor.

CRISSMAN GIVES REPORT

C. P. Russell, Journalist and Former
Carolina Man, Makes Talk.

In the Saturday night session the Di Senate voiced its approval of the Bill: "An Act to give the veto power to the governor of North Carolina," submitted by Senator Stevens.

In the discussion of the Bill Senator Crowell opened the argument proclaiming that the veto power is used by many other states and by the executive of the country, and that the governor of this state should be given the same consideration. He further stated that by giving

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1981

Today's Quote

"The gubernatorial veto will be needed to preserve our system of checks and balances and to counterbalance a General Assembly that is growing in power as well as size."

— Former Gov. Bob Scott

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1985

setback of his second term.

**Martin Vows
To Continue
Veto Battle**

RALEIGH (AP) — Gov. Jim Martin vowed to seek a gubernatorial veto again in 1987 after a House committee rejected by two votes a bill that would have put the issue on next year's election ballot.

"A lot of issues don't win the first time around — North Carolina's governor hasn't had veto power for 200 years," Martin said after Wednesday's vote. "This just means we've got a long haul ahead. Our state reptile is the turtle, and you never get anywhere unless you stick your neck out."

Veto issue is primed for public vote

Cooper's veto bill passes judiciary committee

By **Andrea M. Cashion**
Staff writer

RALEIGH — Sixty-two years ago, both chambers of North Carolina's legislature passed a law that would have given veto power to then-Gov. O. Max Gardner.

a technicality to strike down the law. The veto bill never passed again — but this session's lawmakers seem primed to let North Carolina's voters decide.

The Senate Judiciary and Constitution committee approved a veto bill drafted by N.C. Sen. Roy Cooper, D-10th District, Tuesday morning.

Cooper, who represents Nash, Edgecombe, Halifax and Wilson counties, expected the bill to go to the floor of the Senate today for another vote.

Discussion Tuesday centered not on whether the governor should have veto power, but on what



power should be granted.

Cooper's bill would give the governor a narrowly tailored veto, in which joint resolutions, appointments, constitutional amendments and redistricting legislation could not be vetoed.

The governor would not have line-item veto, which is power to veto portions of appropriations bills instead of the whole piece of legislation. Also absent from Cooper's bill is the related line-reduction power, which would give the governor power

to change appropriations amounts.

"With the appointive powers he has, this (line-item veto) would give our governor too much power," Cooper told the committee.

Cooper also believes the line-

control.

The proposed bill would set the referendum for Nov. 7. If passed, the veto would go into effect Jan. 1, 1996.

The committee also discussed a stronger bill introduced by Minority Leader Betsy Cochrane, R-38th District. Her version included exempting local bills from the veto, a line-item veto and a line-reduction power.

The committee discussed amending Cooper's bill to con-

Gubernatorial Veto in the U.S.

Nine governors may reduce appropriations items. Those states are: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Tennessee and West Virginia.



Telegram/R. Shawn Lewis

tain those provisions, but each one lost by a narrow margin.

Cooper sponsored the same bill last session, when it passed in the Senate but died in the House.

Different versions of the veto bill are expected to soon circulate in House committees, where the Republican majority favors a veto more like Cochrane's than Cooper's.

Finally in 1996

So, our Gov. (finally) has a veto, but...

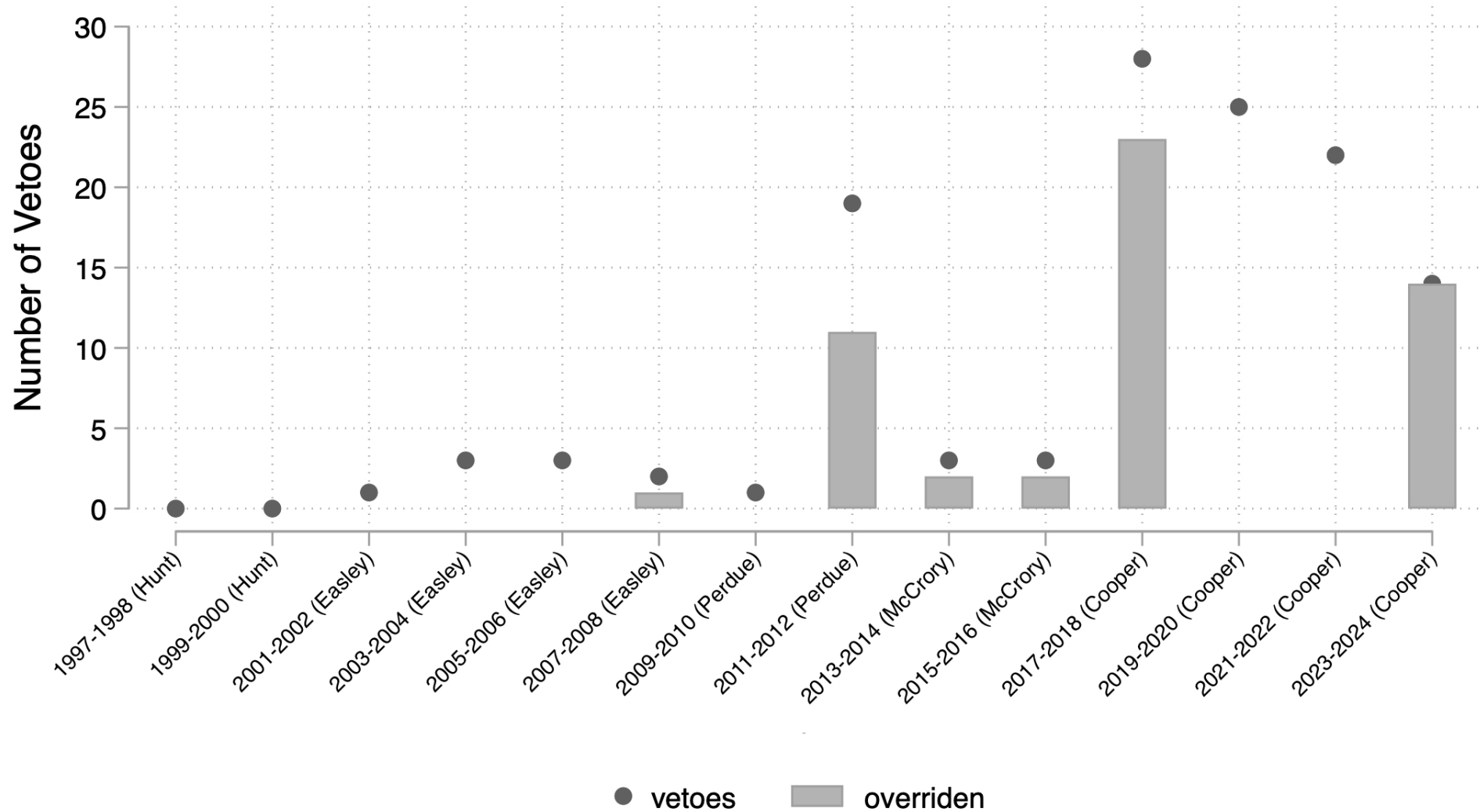
Can be overridden by 3/5

No line item veto (1 of only 5 states)

Doesn't apply to

- Redistricting
- Local bills
- Constitutional amendments
- Appointments

Vetoes in NC by Legislative Session Through August 17 2023



Data from <https://sites.ncleg.gov/library/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/05/VetoStats.pdf>. Graph by Chris Cooper



THANK
YOU

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