

1972

Democrats (George McGovern)

- Senator from South Dakota pledged to end the Vietnam War immediately, calling the war a “tragic waste of human life”
- media critics & voters questioned his judgment when it was discovered his Vice-Presidential choice was under the care of a psychiatrist
- hoped to acquire young voters now that the 26th Amendment lowering the voting age to 18 had been ratified. Even went so far as to suggest that he might support the decriminalization of marijuana, a position that backfired
- new party rules meant that women, young people, & Blacks held equal say in the nomination
- TV coverage of the convention made it appear that the Democratic Convention was dominated by aggressive women, hippies, & militant Blacks
- platform favored amnesty for draft evaders
- platform called for a reevaluation of federal-state relations
- suggested some kinds of gun control, particularly the regulation of handguns
- favored the abolition of the Electoral College

PV = 29,170,383
EV = 17

93rd Congress -> House = 239; Senate = 56
94th Congress -> House = 291; Senate = 60

Republicans (Richard Nixon)

- voter disillusionment with the “system” helped propel Nixon back into White House
- just a few days before the election, Nixon announced that for all intents, the Vietnam War was over
- played up his foreign policy triumphs including opening the door to China & the S.A.L.T. treaty with Russia
- believed that the U.S. was obligated to keep order in the world
- announced the end of the draft & the beginning of an all-volunteer military
- very little press existed about the Watergate break-in, making this a non-issue
- received support from conservative Democrats
- platform called for a national health insurance plan, as opposed to the Democrat's plan for a national health program
- specifically rejected the call to grant amnesty to the tens of thousands of men who fled to Canada and other nations
- pledged to support the 2nd Amendment, the right of citizens to own weapons
- called for national support of the Equal Rights Amendment

PV = 47,169,911
EV = 520

93rd Congress -> House = 192; Senate = 42
94th Congress -> House = 144; Senate = 37

NOTE: Polls suggested that nearly two thirds of all voters received their political information from TV news "sound bites" and TV advertising

