

1996

Democrats (Bill Clinton)

- Democrats successfully linked Republican challenger Dole with Speaker Gingrich, throwing the Republican Party on the defensive
- Clinton had no challengers during the primary season, effectively showing the Democratic Party as unified
- Clinton's handling of the 1995 Oklahoma City terrorist bombing seemed to strengthen his presidential image
- Clinton seemed to focus his campaign against the Republican Congress rather than Dole himself
- the Democratic convention in Chicago 1996 was quite different than the previous one in 1968!
- voters seemed to opt for the status quo
- Clinton seemed to appeal to voter interest in "values" and a "balanced budget," thereby co-opting Republican themes
- Clinton's decision to send troops to Bosnia took away his previous image as a "waffler" in military affairs
- campaign leader Dick Morris was forced to resign because of relations with a prostitute

PV = 42,816,477
EV = 379

105th Congress -> House = 206; Senate = 45
House = 1 Independent
106th Congress -> House = 211; Senate = 45
House = 1 Independent

Republicans (Bob Dole)

- the long-term Senator from Kansas and World War II veteran claimed the nomination early-on in the 1996 primaries, facing only a small challenge from the likes of Pat Buchanan & Steve Forbes
- 104th Congress was blamed for being too extreme; Dole even had to distance himself from Speaker Gingrich
- the Republican tactic of calling Clinton a "liberal" backfired
- Dole didn't seem to have a real agenda throughout the race, often changing his message to try to gain winning appeal
- Dole's repeated attempts to bring Clinton's character flaws into the campaign failed
- Dole's age (73) was a factor with many voters
- Dole's candidacy was viewed as a retreat to the past
- some conservative news commentators argued that Clinton received more favorable treatment in the press, and that continued polls suggesting Dole's eminent loss influenced the electorate
- favored tax reform (following the lead of the Steve Forbes campaign) for a "flatter, fairer tax"

PV = 35,816,693
EV = 159

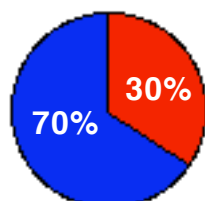
105th Congress -> House = 228; Senate = 55
106th Congress -> House = 223; Senate = 55

Reform Party (Ross Perot)

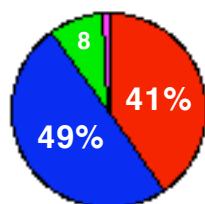
- continued his use of 30-minute infomercials to sell his message
- continued his popularity on Larry King's TV talk show on CNN
- emphasized that the U.S. had to become less competitive in foreign markets and had to solve the deficit problem
- the party did not seem to have the same mass appeal that existed in the 1992 campaign, evident by Perot receiving 12 million fewer votes
- did not have a formal party platform

PV = 7,380,095
EV = 0

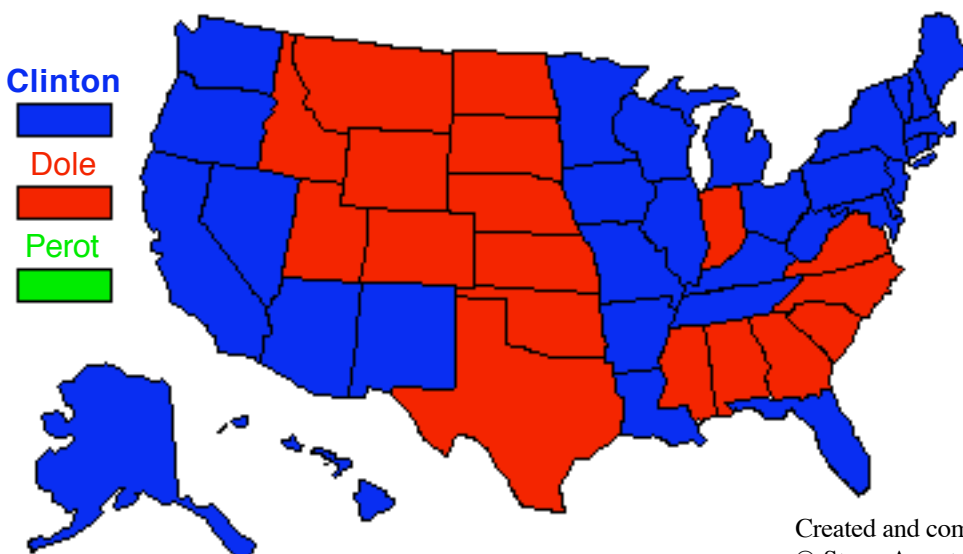
NOTE: Several third party candidates ran national campaigns, including Libertarian Harry Browne, Natural Law Party candidate John Hagelin, and Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. Only C-SPAN provided these candidates regular TV coverage. Browne and Nader unsuccessfully protested the criteria by which candidates were selected to participate in the presidential debates.



Electoral Vote



Popular Vote



Created and compiled by
© Steve Armstrong