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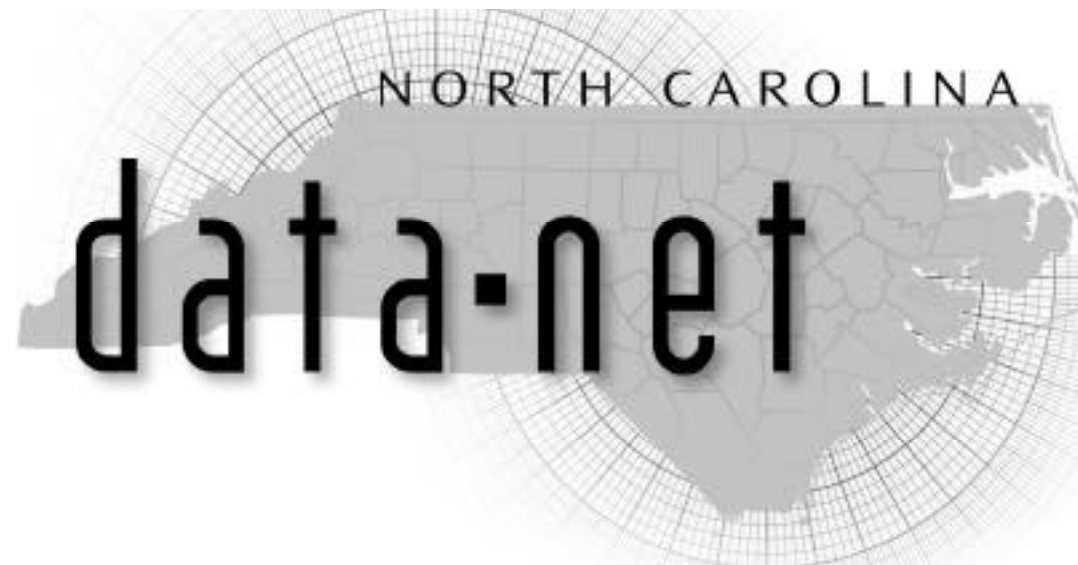
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In This Issue

- 1 North Carolina's Presidential Bellwethers
- 3 Mapping the 2000 Presidential Election in North Carolina
- 4 Growth and Politics in 20th Century North Carolina
- 6 What If North Carolina Used the District System of Assigning Electors?
- 7 Presidential and Congressional Voting Clearly Linked
- 8 Presidential Phone and Mail Polls Deliver Consistent Results
- 9 Exit Polls Show Gap Between North Carolina and Nation
- 9 Ticket Splitting Still Prevalent in North Carolina
- 10 Primary Predicted Election Trends
- 11 Primary and General Election Results Varied Widely



N.C.'s Presidential Bellwethers

ERIC JOHNSON, Junior Political Science Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

Do "bellwether" counties exist in North Carolina for presidential elections? Does victory in any county reliably predict which candidate will win the state's electoral votes?

Research indicates that such counties do exist for presidential contests. Twenty-seven counties sided with the statewide victor in at least 10 of the last 11 presidential elections dating back to 1960, including George W. Bush in 2000. This study identifies those counties that serve as the best and worst indicators of presidential victory in North Carolina and explores their possible connections.

Prior to 1968, Democratic presidential candidates could feel assured of a victory in North Carolina and in most other states of the Solid South. Then the Civil Rights movement and shifts in party ideology combined with the success in North Carolina of American Party candidate George Wallace to give Republican Richard Nixon a win in 1968.

Since then, the only Democrat to carry the state was Jimmy Carter in 1976, no doubt aided by fallout from the Watergate scandal. Democratic candidates rarely contest the state now, despite the excellent track record of Democratic gubernatorial bids.

Of the 27 presidential bellwether counties since

1960, only three have a perfect record: Carteret, Dare and New Hanover – all coastal counties.

However, the other 24 predicted the victor each election since 1968, with the exception of Union County, which incumbent Jimmy Carter won in 1980.

There are several possible factors that could affect the voting tendencies of these counties. These include the race, age, and level of education of the voters within a county, and whether a county is in or near to a metropolitan statistical area. Historical factors are also of importance. The measures used here are based on 1990 census data.

In western North Carolina, there are eleven bellwether counties: Ashe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, and Transylvania. They contain an extremely high percentage of whites, many with less than a college education. These mostly rural counties lie in a traditionally Republican part of the state but could have identified with the rural Southern backgrounds of Lyndon Johnson (1964) and Jimmy Carter (1976, 1980).

In the western Piedmont there are seven bellwether counties - Forsyth, Gaston, Lincoln, Rowan, Stokes, Surry and Union. Lincoln, Stokes and Surry bear resemblances to their western counterparts, but the others tend to have slightly more educated and diverse population. All but Surry are classified as a part of a metropolitan statistical area.

Dating back to 1960, 27 of North Carolina's 100 counties sided with the statewide victor in at least 10 of the last 11 presidential elections, including George W. Bush in 2000.

Most of the bellwether counties are rural or suburban. Eleven are in the west, seven are in the Piedmont, and nine are in the east.

SEE BELLWETHERS ON PAGE 2 →

However, these counties generally contain suburbs of cities such as Charlotte or the Piedmont Triad (Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem), which generally vote for the Republican presidential candidate.

Down East there are nine bellwether counties in two separate clusters. The first is the pocket of Johnston, Nash and Wilson counties just east of Raleigh and Wake County. Then there are six coastal counties - Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Dare, New Hanover and Onslow. In the first three, a lower percentage of

whites and a relatively lesser-educated population lead to elections that the suburban and rural whites still usually decide. And Johnston is rapidly becoming a "suburb" county for Raleigh.

Wilson County presidential election results tend to be closer than Johnston or Nash because it is more diverse and lacks suburban voters.

In the second group of coastal counties, Beaufort and Craven both contain somewhat lesser-educated and relatively diverse populations living in rural areas. Here the balance usually tips toward the Republicans. Carteret and Dare counties both lack diversity, though Dare's education levels are higher than the state average.

Onslow and New Hanover counties contain a Marine base and a university, respectively, bringing in voters from all over the country

and state, creating an environment that usually supports a Republican but maintains a competitive Democratic base.

At the other end of the bellwether scale are Northampton and Orange counties which serve as the worst predictors for presidential victory in North Carolina. Voters in these counties consistently vote Democratic—not surprising given the presence of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Orange County and the fact that only 40 percent of the people of Northampton County are white.

Members of the university community and the minority community tend to stick to the Democratic Party, and these counties do not buck that trend.

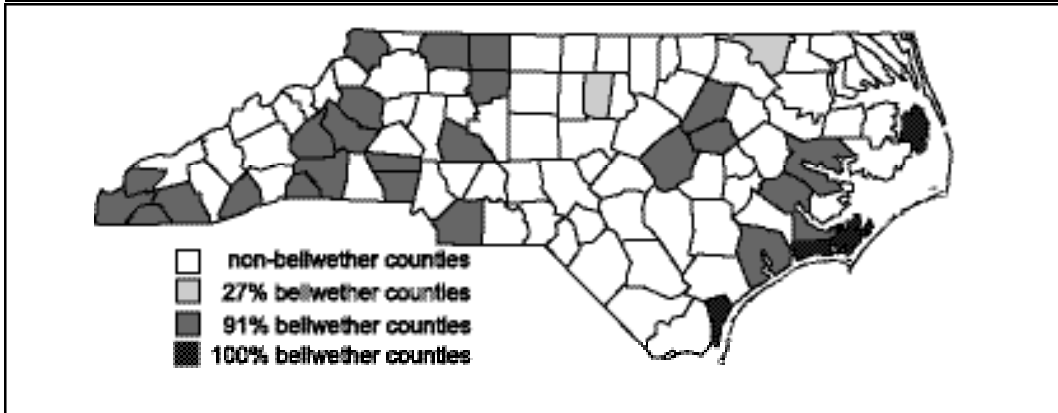
Presidential bellwethers in North Carolina do not share the degree of similarity that gubernatorial bellwethers do, as we will note in an

upcoming issue. If anything, presidential bellwethers are predominantly rural or suburban, other than Forsyth and New Hanover counties. The implications for presidential candidates are less clear in this situation.

Recent years leave Democrats with little reason for optimism for carrying the state, yet Republicans cannot point to one factor that guarantees them victory with certainty. To win the state in a presidential election, candidates should run television advertising campaigns using media markets such as Charlotte, Piedmont Triad, Research Triangle and Wilmington media markets. The coverage area of stations in these cities encompasses most of the 27 bellwether counties across the state.

Candidates should advertise on television and concentrate personal appearances in other battleground states. ■

Presidential Bellwether Counties, 1960-2000 Election Accuracy

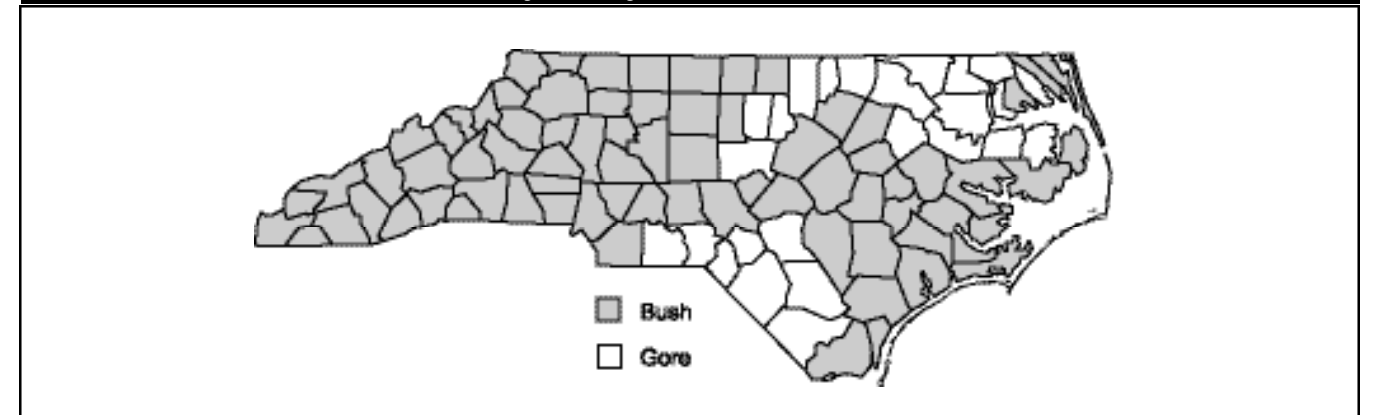


County Victory as an Indication of State Victory in Presidential Elections

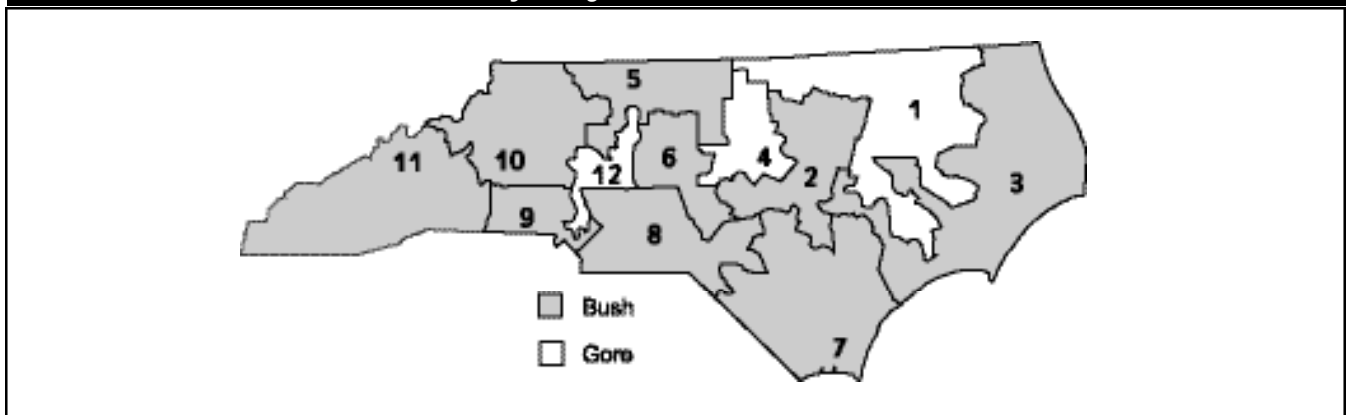
COUNTY	1960*	1964*	1968	1972	1976*	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	BELLWETHER RATE -%
CARTERET	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
DARE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
NEW HANOVER	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
ASHE	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
BEAUFORT	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
BURKE	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
CALDWELL	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
CHEROKEE	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
CLAY	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
CRAVEN	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
FORSYTH	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
GASTON	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
GRAHAM	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
JOHNSTON	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
LINCOLN	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
MACON	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
MCDOWELL	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
NASH	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
ONSLow	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
POLK	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
ROWAN	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
RUTHERFORD	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
STOKES	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
SURRY	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
TRANSYLVANIA	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
UNION	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
WILSON	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	91
NORTHAMPTON	Y	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
ORANGE	Y	Y	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	27

SOURCES — America Votes and United States Census Bureau
 KEY —
 * — Democratic victory. All other statewide races won by Republicans.
 Y — County vote went to statewide winner.
 - — County vote did not go to statewide winner
 A — American Party candidate George Wallace carried the county.

2000 Presidential Election Results, by County



2000 Presidential Election Results, by Congressional District



Growth and Politics in 20th Century North Carolina

THAD BEYLE, Pearsall Professor of Political Science, UNC-Chapel Hill

One gains some insight into the changes in our state's politics by stepping back and measuring the impact of growth on the body politic during the 20th century.

To aid in this endeavor are four tables comparing the way in which North Carolina voters cast their ballots in six separate presidential elections between 1900 and 2000. The specific presidential elections selected occurred in the last year of the decade, the same year that the U.S. Census is taken.

15 Largest Counties of 2000

YEAR	TOTAL POP. ¹	15 CO.% ²	PRESIDENT TOTAL VOTE ³	15 LARGEST COUNTIES VOTE % ⁴
1900	1,893,810	24.9	292,457	70,699 24.2
1920	2,559,123	29.0	538,295	157,213 29.2
1940	3,571,623	34.3	822,648	287,721 35.0
1960	4,556,155	41.6	1,368,556	573,973 41.9
1980	5,880,095	45.9	1,855,833	838,693 45.2
2000	8,049,313	49.3	2,911,262	1,463,841 50.3

SOURCES — N.C. State Board of Elections, North Carolina Manual, selected years.

FOOTNOTES —
¹Total N.C. state population according to the census conducted that election year.
²15 largest counties percent of the total N.C. population that year.
³Total N.C. statewide presidential vote that election year, all candidates.
⁴Total presidential vote in the 15 largest N.C. counties [by 2000 Census] that election year, all candidates, and percent of the total N.C. presidential vote from these 15 counties.

We look at these six elections from two perspectives. First is the history of how voters in the 15 largest counties in the 2000 Census actually voted over the past 100 years. Second is a similar history of how voters in the state's major and rising metropolitan areas have voted over the same

period.

Here are some highlights to consider:

Overall Growth: In the 1900-2000 period, the population of the state more than quadrupled. However, the size of the presidential vote increased nearly 10 times. Much of this change is due to major shifts in governmental election policies — the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, which gave women the right to vote; the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which guaranteed minorities the right to vote; and the adoption of the 26th Amendment, which opened the voting booth to citizens between 18 and 21.

The 15 Largest Counties of 2000: A considerable amount of this growth focused on the 15 most populous counties of 2000. While these counties held just less than a quarter of the state's population in 1900, by 2000 they were home to nearly half the state's population. Their share of the presidential vote in →

these two election years also moved from just below one quarter of the total vote to over one half of the total vote.

Partisan Voting in the 15 Largest Counties: Both major parties received just less than one quarter of their statewide presidential vote from voters in these counties in the 1900 election. By the 2000 election, their share of the total state vote for their candidates had more than doubled, with the Democratic vote up by nearly 4 percentage points over the Republican vote.

The Three Traditional Metropolitan Areas: In 1900, one in 12 votes came from the three traditional metropolitan areas of Charlotte, the Piedmont Triad, and what is now the Research Triangle. Now more than

one in three votes comes from the seven core counties in these metro areas. The greatest growth in the last few decades has been in the three core Research Triangle counties — Durham, Orange and Wake — that have seen their share of the statewide vote more than double since the 1960 presidential election.

The Smaller Metropolitan Counties: A slightly different picture emerges when looking at the four smaller metropolitan counties of the state — Buncombe (Asheville), Cumberland (Fayetteville), New Hanover (Wilmington), and Pitt (Greenville).

Their share of the statewide vote has not risen as sharply as their more traditional counterparts — from about one in 15 voters in the 1900 presidential election to one in 11

voters in the 2000 election. But each is growing, with New Hanover County showing the largest growth over the past two decades.

One political fact of life is clear from these changes. Each of these metropolitan counties and the 15 largest counties are part of the major media markets in the state. Where they are marginally in those major media markets cable television and individual antennas bring the media market to them.

Political campaigning will continue its move toward direct contact with potential voters though television and radio political ads in those media markets. We saw this quite clearly in the 2000 elections and can only expect more in the future as the state continues growing. ■

Three Traditional Metro Areas, 1900-2000

YEAR	PRESIDENT RACE VOTE ¹	RESEARCH TRIANGLE CO'S VOTE % ²	CHARLOTTE METRO CO'S VOTE % ³	PIEDMONT TRIAD CO'S VOTE % ⁴
1900	292,457	15,719 5.6	9,713 3.3	11,773 4.0
1920	538,295	23,599 4.4	27,685 5.1	32,450 6.0
1940	822,648	42,822 5.2	57,337 7.0	64,124 7.8
1960	1,368,556	90,517 6.6	128,966 9.4	129,252 9.4
1980	1,855,833	181,423 9.8	188,262 10.1	187,420 10.1
2000	2,911,262	402,168 13.8	322,215 11.1	287,206 9.9

SOURCES — N.C. State Board of Elections, North Carolina Manual, selected years.

FOOTNOTES —
¹Total N.C. statewide presidential vote that election year, all candidates.
²Total presidential vote in the Research Triangle counties — Durham, Orange, and Wake — and the percent of the statewide vote that represents.
³Total presidential vote in the Charlotte metropolitan counties — Gaston and Mecklenburg — and the percent of the statewide vote that represents.
⁴Total presidential vote in the Piedmont Triad counties — Forsyth and Guilford — and the percent of the statewide vote that represents.

Smaller Metro Counties, 1900-2000

YEAR	PRESIDENT RACE VOTE ¹	BUNCOMBE VOTES %	CUMBERLAND VOTES %	NEW HANOVER VOTES %	PITT VOTES %
1900	292,457	7,899 2.7	4,113 1.4	2,307 0.8	5,456 1.9
1920	538,295	18,184 3.4	5,205 1.0	4,814 0.9	5,060 0.9
1940	822,648	33,601 4.1	7,168 0.9	10,235 1.2	10,436 1.3
1960	1,368,556	52,343 3.8	19,673 1.4	22,957 1.7	15,984 1.2
1980	1,855,833	53,530 2.9	45,228 2.4	32,244 1.7	26,371 1.4
2000	2,911,262	85,476 2.9	77,151 2.7	66,319 2.3	43,075 1.5

SOURCES — N.C. State Board of Elections, North Carolina Manual, selected years.

FOOTNOTES —
¹Total N.C. statewide presidential vote that election year, all candidates.

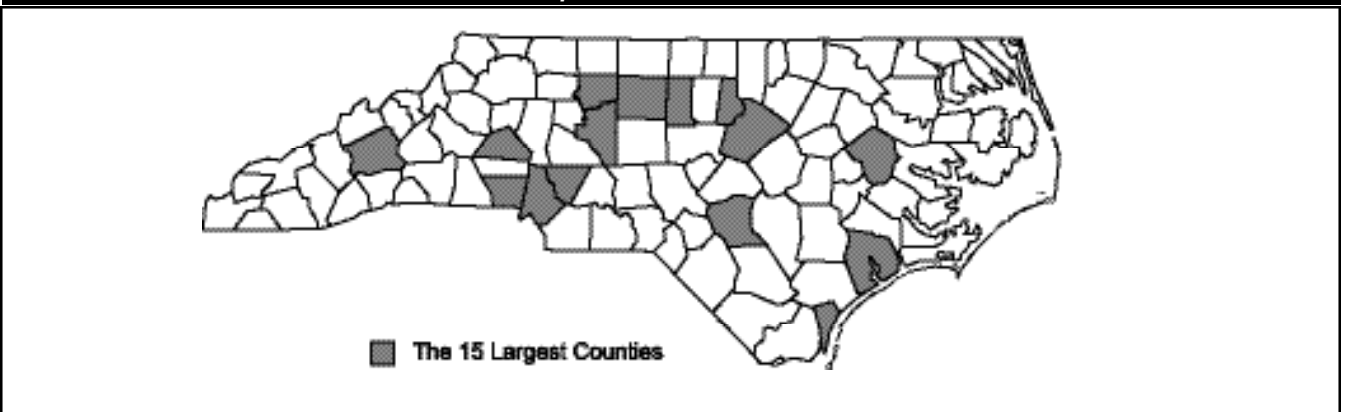
Partisan Voting in the 15 Largest Counties

YEAR	DEMOCRATIC VOTE % ¹	REPUBLICAN VOTE % ²	WINNER, PARTY	N.C. WIN ³
1900	38,045 24.1	32,048 24.1	MCKINLEY, R	NO
1920	91,994 30.1	65,219 28.0	HARDING, R	NO
1940	223,652 36.7	64,069 30.0	ROOSEVELT, D	YES
1960	274,489 38.5	296,574 45.2	KENNEDY, D	YES
1980	377,172 43.1	423,718 46.3	REAGAN, R	YES
2000	659,414 52.4	793,481 48.6	BUSH, R	YES

SOURCES — N.C. State Board of Elections, North Carolina Manual, selected years.

FOOTNOTES —
¹Total Democratic presidential vote in the 15 largest counties [by 2000 Census], and the percent of the total Democratic presidential N.C. vote this represents.
²Total Republican presidential vote in the 15 largest counties [by 2000 Census], and the percent of the total Republican presidential NC vote this represents.
³Did the national winner carry N.C.?

Location of North Carolina's 15 Most Populous Counties



What If: Old Results, New System

THAD BEYLE, Pearsall Professor of Political Science, UNC-Chapel Hill

There have been a wide range of bills introduced in Congress and in state legislatures aimed at reforming how elections are conducted. They were stimulated by the controversies surrounding the 2000 presidential election. Many reforms are aimed at copying Maine and Nebraska's rare method of allocating some electoral college votes by congressional district.

Under our current electoral college system, each state gets one vote for each of its two U.S. Senators and one vote for each of its House members. Whoever wins the statewide popular vote gets all of the state's electoral votes. In Maine and Nebraska, only two of the electoral votes — those tied to the U.S. Senators — are determined by the statewide vote. The state's other electoral votes would be given to the candidate who wins the popular vote in each congressional district.

This District System breaks with the original theory of the electoral college — a group of white, male property owners meeting in state capitols to determine the next president. As our society has grown more diverse and matured politically so there is considerably wider participation in voting, we need to think how this can be best manifested in the electoral college. The District System

approach is a step in that direction.

What would happen in North Carolina under such a change? As can be seen in the Table covering presidential elections since 1944, the Republicans were disadvantaged through 1964. In 1968, George Wallace's American Independent Party was the victim of the statewide "winner-takes-all" rule. However, there was one "defector elector" that year. Republican physician and John Birch Society member Lloyd Bailey of Wilson cast his electoral vote for Wallace rather than the statewide winner Nixon. How did the other Republican electors react to this heresy? Bailey said they treated him as if he were "an illegitimate child at a family reunion." But, Wallace had carried the 2nd Congressional District where Bailey lived. If the District approach had been in effect that year, Wallace would have received that vote plus three more electoral votes.

There would have been no change in the two presidential elections of the 1970s. Nixon in 1972 and Carter in 1976 carried all of the districts. Since then, the winner-take-all system has disadvantaged the Democrats. For example, in the 1992 and 1996 elections Republicans George Bush and Bob Dole carried the state and won all 14 electoral →

North Carolina's Electoral College Votes, 1944-2000

YEAR	W/ECV ¹ [MARGIN]	CD WINS ²	NEW ECV ³	CHANGE ⁴	DISTRICTS ⁵
1944	D-14 [34]	12D ---	14D ---	----	—
1948	D-14 [25]	11D 1R	13D 1R	+1R	9
1952	D-14 [8]	8D 4R	10D 4R	+4R	9, 10, 11, 12
1956	D-14 [2]	5D 7R	7D 7R	+7R	5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
1960	D-14 [4]	5D 7R	7D 7R	+7R	5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
1964	D-13 [12]	10D 1R	12D 1R	+1R	9
1968	R-13 [9]	--- 7R 4A	--- 9R 4A	+4A	1, 2, 3, 7 ⁶
1972	R-13 [42]	--- 11R	--- 13R	----	—
1976	D-13 [12]	11D ---	13D ---	----	—
1980	R-13 [2]	4D 7R	4D 9R	+4D	1, 2, 3, 7
1984	R-13 [24]	--- 11R	--- 13R	----	—
1988	R-13 [4]	1D 10R	1D 12R	+1D	2
1992	R-14 [0.5]	5D 7R	5D 9R	+5D	1, 4, 7, 11, 12
1996	R-14 [5]	3D 9R	3D 11R	+3D	1, 4, 12
2000	R-14 [13]	3D 9R	3D 11R	+3D	1, 4, 12

FOOTNOTES —

- Parties = D = Democratic; R = Republican; A = American Independent Party [G. Wallace-1968].
¹W/ECV[Margin] = Winning party statewide, number of Electoral College votes, statewide margin of victory.
²CD Wins = the number of Congressional Districts won by the presidential candidates.
³NEW ECV = the shift in allocation of Electoral College votes if the District Plan were in place that election year. Two EC votes go with the statewide winner [US Senate seats], and the rest are from the CD Wins that year.
⁴Change - which candidate's party would have gained from a switch to the District System for selecting Electoral College votes.
⁵Districts - congressional districts that did not vote for the statewide winner.
⁶1968 - Nixon-R won with 40% of the statewide vote; Wallace-AIP was second with 31%, and Humphrey-D was third with 29%.

votes. Democrat Bill Clinton carried five of the state's congressional districts in 1992, and three of the state's congressional districts in 1996 yet received none of the state's electoral votes. In 2000, Al Gore mirrored the 1996 race by winning Eva Clayton's 1st District, David Price's 4th District, and Mel Watt's 12th District. If North Carolina had joined Maine and Nebraska as the only other state to have the District System in 2000, the Florida debacle would not be as critical because the three electoral votes Gore would have received in North Carolina might have made him the winner with 270 of the 538 Electoral College votes. If all the states allocated their electoral votes by district, Bush still would have won.

The most important reason for such a change is to reduce the impact of the exit polls and the media's need to report who will be the winner. Currently, exit polls are taken on a statewide basis through a sampling process that project results representative of what the final vote count will be. That would still work in those states with only one congressional seat and it might also work in those states with only two congressional seats. But, in states with more than three congressional

districts, the costs of conducting exit polls would become much greater and there would probably be quite a few congressional district electoral votes that are "too close to call."

On Election Night I worked at the Associated Press helping call the various elections in the state. At about 7:15 p.m., the head of the Raleigh Bureau got a call from the Washington AP office indicating they were going to call Bush the winner in North Carolina as soon as the polls closed at 7:30. Ten minutes later they called and said they were going to call Mike Easley the winner in the governor's race, still before the polls closed and any votes had been counted. That became a bit difficult a few minutes later as the early returns showed Richard Vinroot leading Easley for at least a half-hour while Easley was being called the winner.

These early exit poll driven calls in the Eastern and Mid-Western time-zone states have been a problem over many of the recent presidential elections. Once it becomes clear that the states in those two time zones have elected the next president, voting becomes less of a need in the Western

time-zone states. While the media has tried to control for this impact, we still saw the Florida vote "called" early for Gore before the polls had closed in the western Panhandle counties of that state. Besides the "call" being wrong as the election in that state was too close to call, it violated the unwritten rule against calling the election in a state before the polls close.

A state legislator in Wisconsin has proposed that the 2004 presidential vote in his state not be tabulated and reported until after the polls close on the west coast. This would help alleviate the time-zone problems. That might work but the drive to find out just who is winning is almost too great to overcome by instituting such a rule. There are too many individuals involved in the election process that could leak information to the anxious media and political actors.

Why not just make it all a bit more complex just like the country we live in has become? Make the EC vote consist of the 100 votes from the 50 statewide results and the 438 votes from individual congressional districts and DC. We can take a step in that direction here in North Carolina. ■

Presidential and Congressional Voting Clearly Linked

THAD BEYLE, Pearsall Professor of Political Science, UNC-Chapel Hill

To take a closer look at what might have happened if the North Carolina electoral college votes had been determined under the district system, the Table "The 2000 Presidential Election by N.C. Congressional Districts" lays out the specific votes in each district for both the congressional and presidential races.

Clearly, there is a high correlation between presidential voting and congressional voting. Democratic candidate Al Gore received the fewest votes in the 10th Congressional District, held by Republican Rep. Cass Ballenger of Hickory, and the most votes in the 12th District, which is held by Democrat Mel Watt of Charlotte.

Also of interest in this table is the relationship between Bush's presidential and the Republican congressional incumbents' vote percentages. In three districts, strong Republican congressional incumbents clearly helped Bush — Sue Myrick in the 9th District, Richard Burr in the 5th District and Howard Coble in the 6th District. In fact, Burr and Coble were unopposed in their reelection bids, so Gore had no congressional voting support to buoy him in those two districts.

Bush won two Democratic districts — Bob Etheridge's 2nd District and Mike McIntyre's

7th District — by overcoming very weak Republican congressional campaigns. In three other districts, Bush and the Republican incumbent received the same level of support from the voters — Walter Jones in the 3rd District, Robin Hayes in the 8th District, and Cass Ballenger in the 10th District. Bush probably helped Charles Taylor in the 11th District in his difficult reelection bid.

Then there were the three districts in which a very weak Republican showing in the congressional race could not be overcome by Bush. These are basically Democratic districts for both the presidential and congressional candidates, and there were well-known Democratic incumbents seeking reelection — Eva Clayton in the 1st District, David Price in the 4th District and Mel Watt in the 12th District.

All this suggests that if North Carolina were to allocate some of its electoral votes by congressional district, the congressional redistricting fights would gain a new quality. Not only would the state legislature be determining which party might win which districts in the state's next congressional delegation, but also which party's presidential candidate might win which district's electoral college

vote. The potential changes in how politics would be played out are considerable with such a change. With such unknown political odds in play, the chances of the state shifting to the district system seem quite low. ■

The 2000 Presidential Election by N.C. Congressional District

Bush Vote	Dist. #	House Member	Cong. R Vote
67	10th	Ballenger, R	68
64	6th	Coble, R	91u
62	5th	Burr, R	93u
61	3rd	Jones, R	61
60	9th	Myrick, R	69
59	11th	Taylor, R	55
56	8th	Hayes, R	55
55	2nd	Etheridge, D	41
53	7th	McIntyre, D	29
48	4th	Price, D	37
44	1st	Clayton, D	33
42	12th	Watt, D	33

SOURCE — Clark Bensen, "Much Ado About Nothing?" The Cook Political Report [April 10, 2001]: 75.

KEY —
 Cong. R Vote = % of district vote won by Republican candidate for Congress;
 u = unopposed by major party candidate.

Presidential Phone, Mail Polls Consistent

EVAN SAUDA, Senior Political Science Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

North Carolina was not a pivotal state in the 2000 presidential election. The outcome of the race in the state was never really in doubt. Every poll showed eventual winner George W. Bush ahead by at least 4 percentage points. North Carolina's electoral votes did go to Bush, who won the state handily with 56 percent to Democrat Al Gore's 43 percent.

The other candidates on the ballot, Harry Browne, a Libertarian, and Pat Buchanan, running on the Reform Party ticket, weren't quite able to win 22,000 votes between them – less than 0.75 percent. A notable absence from the ballot in the state was Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate who might have tipped the balance even further in Bush's favor.

The Flash Poll and the Mason-Dixon poll were the most regular polls in the state over the course of the race. Between the primary and the general election, they were taken nine times and four times, respectively. Both polls consistently predicted Bush's showing in the general election. The inconsistencies that plagued the Flash Poll in the governor's race were absent. The Mason-Dixon poll was also a good indicator of the election result.

All of the polls screened their respondents in some way either as being registered voters, likely voters,

or definite voters. Some, like the FlashPoll, included in the sample only registered voters who are likely to vote. This improves the poll's accuracy, but may increase the cost of doing a poll since the odds of reaching a registered definite voter with a random phone number are probably about 50-50.

The only other poll that was conducted multiple times was the Research 2000 Poll, which in early October predicted a rather paltry amount of Bush support. Two partisan polls were briefly on the radar screen immediately after the primary, and both predicted Bush as the eventual winner. The Republican poll, conducted by The Tarrance Group, came closest to predicting the eventual spread. It missed by just one point in predicting a 14-point victory in what turned out to be a 13-point race.

One thing a poll can do to improve its accuracy is to increase its sample size. Only one poll other than the Voter News Service Exit Poll had a sample size of more than 750 voters. A larger number of respondents does not reduce the margin of error of a poll greatly, which is why some of the budget-minded sponsors of the polls probably chose not to use larger sample sizes. But a larger sample allows larger samples of subgroups within the state to reflect more accurately the attitudes of such subgroups as women or blacks or white men who live in the eastern part of the state. This information is more valuable to the news media and political analysts than a poll result that simply says that statewide, one candidate is ahead of another by a certain margin.

The Flash Poll's sample of 500 likely registered voters had an overall margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points. The phone-based Carolina Polls had 650 respondents and a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent. But the Carolina Poll yielded meaningful subgroup samples. The Flash Poll could yield meaningful samples only for large subgroups based on race or gender, but not an intersection of both. The Carolina Poll, by contrast, also had questions allowing the results to be broken down further, by level of education, region and other factors.

All of the polls but one were done by phone. The exception, which also happened to have the largest sample size of any of the pre-election polls, was a mail poll done by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-CH. The mail poll was fairly accurate, but it overestimated Bush's strength. But mail polling isn't likely to catch on. The fast pace of newsgathering leads one to conclude that a mail poll simply cannot be completed fast enough for modern news media. And since the modern media usually pay the bills, don't expect to see widespread mail polling soon. ■

Presidential Polls in North Carolina, 2000

Date of Poll	Polling Organization	Sample Size/Type	Bush R*	Gore D*
Feb. 26-29	Mason-Dixon Poll	633 lvs	47	39
April 24-26	Mason-Dixon Poll	624 lvs	49	39
May 3-4	Tarrance Group-R	500 rvs	46	32
May 31-June 4	Hickman-Brown Res.-D	600 dvs	50	43
June 2-4	Research 2000 Poll	405 lvs	44	39
July 12-13	Flash Poll	500 lvs	56	32
July 20-23	Mason-Dixon Poll	625 lvs	46	39
August 26-27	Flash Poll	500 lvs	51	44
Sept. 5-8	NC Free Poll	600 lvs	48	39
Sept. 9-10	Flash Poll	500 lvs	51	43
Sept. 13-16	Mason-Dixon Poll	625 lvs	47	42
Sept. 18-19	Flash Poll	500 lvs	49	45
Oct. 4-6	Research 2000 Poll	404 lvs	48	44
Oct. 5-8	Mason-Dixon Poll	625 lvs	47	43
Oct. 7-8	Flash Poll	500 lvs	55	40
Oct. 12-17	KPC Research	770 lvs	50	38
Oct. 14-15	Flash Poll	500 lvs	56	37
Oct. 17-Nov. 3	Carolina Poll-mail	1628 avs	59	41
Oct. 21-22	Flash Poll	500 lvs	55	41
Oct. 27-30	Mason-Dixon Poll	625 lvs	48	41
Oct. 28-29	Flash Poll	500 lvs	54	41
Oct. 29-Nov. 2	Carolina Poll-phone	748 ads	53	40
Nov. 4-5	Flash Poll	500 lvs	56	39
Nov. 7	VNS Exit Poll	1216 vs	54	45
Nov. 7	The Actual Vote		56	44

KEY — Type of sample: ads = adults; dvs = definite voters; lvs = likely voters; rvs = registered voters; avs = active voters; vs = voters
* = percentages are of the 2-party vote or intention to vote

Exit Polls Show Gap Between N.C., Nation

EVAN SAUDA, Senior Political Science Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

The exit polls of the 2000 presidential election are very valuable tools for political analysis. Their larger sample sizes allow smaller sub-groups to be broken out of the sample as a whole and still be large enough to be valid.

In the nation as a whole, the voting pattern by income levels followed conventional wisdom. In the South, however, this pattern broke down.

The lowest two income levels – those under \$30,000 per year – were still mostly for Gore. But the poor in the Southern sample were

more likely to vote Republican than the poor in the national sample. At higher income levels, the South voted dramatically more Republican than the rest of the country.

North Carolina followed a somewhat different pattern from the rest of the South – all income groups except one voted for Bush. The only group of voters among which Gore had a lead were voters whose annual family income was between \$30,000 and \$60,000.

In the nation as a whole, Gore won the vote

SEE DIFFERENCES ON PAGE 11 →

Ticket Splitting Continues in N.C.

JONATHAN TRIBULA, Senior Public Policy Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

In every presidential election year since 1992, North Carolina has elected a Democratic governor, while giving its electoral votes to a Republican presidential candidate. North Carolina also has both a Republican and a Democratic U.S. Senator, and a split congressional delegation. In the 2000 election, Republican presidential candidate George Bush carried the state with more than 56 percent of the vote, while Democratic gubernatorial candidate Mike Easley won that race with 52 percent of the vote. This is a swing of 8 percentage points of support from the Republican presidential candidate to the Democratic gubernatorial candidate.

The 2000 Voter News Service exit poll in North Carolina provides us with some indications of just which groups of voters in the N.C. electorate were splitting their tickets and breaking party lines. The most interesting contrasts in the poll results are the differing levels of support between Bush and Republican gubernatorial candidate Richard Vinroot. Statewide, Bush ran 10 points stronger than Vinroot in the exit poll, and this spread was even greater among some categories of voters:

- While the 8 point actual vote shift held for men, women — and especially white women — were more likely to make the switch from Bush to Easley.

- Voters between 18 and 29 years old were also more likely to vote for Bush and not for Vinroot. This obviously included some recent college graduates who have been often known for their conservative voting over the past decade.

Exit Polls: Bush v. Vinroot

	POLL %	BUSH %	VINROOT %	DIFF. % PTS.
STATEWIDE	100	54	48	- 6
MEN	47	60	52	- 8
WOMEN	53	52	42	-10
WHITE WOMEN	51	65	52	-13
PROTESTANTS	76	61	51	-10
COLLEGE GRADS	27	55	45	-10
AGE 18-29	18	50	39	-11
EARN > \$100K	11	57	43	-14

SOURCE — N.C. Newspaper Reports of VNS Exit Poll, November 2000

- Protestants, more than three-quarters of the exit poll sample, supported both Republicans. But while Vinroot received just slightly more than half of their votes, Bush got more than 60 percent of their votes.

- Those voters who indicated incomes of over \$100,000 – normally a Republican and conservative leaning group of voters – were the category in which there appeared to be the greatest slippage from Bush to Easley.

One reason for this cross-party voting by North Carolina voters is probably their support for the party in power. Voters have clearly been happy with the Democratic administration in Raleigh, but not as happy with the Democratic administration in Washington. Bush benefited from the malaise around recent national politics,

SEE TICKET SPLITTING ON PAGE 11 →

Exit Polls: N.C., U.S., South

	All %	Bush %	Gore %
Vote by Income			
-\$15K:			
Nation	7	37	57
South	8	42	56
NC	7	0	0
-\$15K-\$30K:			
Nation	16	41	54
South	17	43	54
NC	18	53	46
-\$30K-\$50K:			
Nation	24	48	49
South	25	54	44
NC	27	49	50
-\$50K-\$75K:			
Nation	25	51	46
South	25	61	37
NC	23	65	34
-\$75K-\$100K:			
Nation	13	52	45
South	12	62	36
NC	14	63	35
-\$100K+:			
Nation	15	54	43
South	12	69	30
NC	11	57	42
Vote by Age			
18-29:			
Nation	17	46	48
South	17	52	44
NC	18	50	48
30-44:			
Nation	33	49	48
South	33	57	41
NC	33	54	45
45-59:			
Nation	28	49	48
South	28	56	42
NC	28	57	42
60+:			
Nation	22	47	51
South	22	54	45
NC	20	63	37
Vote by Race			
White:			
Nation	81	54	42
South	74	67	31
NC	78	68	31
Black:			
Nation	10	9	90
South	17	8	91
NC	19	9	90
Hispanic:			
Nation	7	35	62
South	7	50	48
NC	0	0	0
Asian:			
Nation	2	41	55
South	1	0	0
NC	1	0	0
Other:			
Nation	1	39	55
South	2	0	0
NC	1	0	0

SOURCE — CNN.com

Primary Predicted Election Trends

JOHN BRANCH, Senior Political Science Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

The May 2, 2000 presidential primary elections in North Carolina could have been used as a predictor for the November 7, 2000 election. George W. Bush pulled a larger percent of his Republican Party base – 78.6 percent – than did Al Gore of his Democratic Party base – 70.4 percent. There was also a higher rate of “no preference” votes by Democrats in their primary – 9.2 percent – than by Republicans in their primary – 1.7 percent. These two trends seemed to indicate Bush would be more successful among his party members in the general election than Gore would be among his. Further it suggests that some Democrats would continue their pattern of voting for the Republican candidate in the presidential election.

In the early presidential primary race, both Bush and Gore faced serious challengers in John McCain and Bill Bradley. But both McCain and Bradley had conceded to the ultimate winners by March 9 – nearly two months before the North Carolina Primary. Still, 15.5 percent of the North Carolina primary voters cast their votes for these two candidates who had already conceded defeat. There could be at least two reasons for this. The first is that these votes could be viewed as protests over the direction of the nominating process in their party had taken. On the Democratic side, nearly one in every 6 voters cast their vote for Bradley. On the Republican side only one in slightly more than 9 voters cast their vote for McCain. This suggests slightly more discontent on the Democratic side of the ballot.

The second reason could be that these particular voters had already made up their minds for whom they were going to vote for before the candidates conceded in early March. In a few words, they were so tied to Bradley and McCain that their concessions to Bush and Gore meant nothing to these voters. Through their campaigns, these candidates had developed strong personal followings across the country and people would have stuck with their candidate even though he had lost the nomination fight.

An important factor to consider in analyzing these returns is that a much larger proportion of the NC voting population are registered as Democrats than as Republicans. In order to win in November, Bush had to pull a substantial number of voters away from their Democratic registration and get them to vote for him. In the primaries, 222,405 more people voted in the Democratic primary than

in the Republican primary. To some, this might have meant that Gore could afford to lose some of the support of registered Democrats and still win the general election.

Still, the large number of registered Democrats can be misleading. From the beginning of the 20th Century until recently the vast majority of North Carolinians were registered as Democrats. Often, the real election was held in the Democratic primary, not in the general election, because the Democratic Party had such a strong hold over the state.

Recently, North Carolinians have been voting in increasing numbers for Republicans in national elections. This split began in the late 1950s and 1960s and has culminated in North Carolina being in the Republican column in every presidential election since 1968, except 1976. The state also boasts one of the longest serving Republican U.S. Senators in Jesse Helms, who has been successful in bringing “Jessecrats” to his support each time. And since 1974, the other U.S. Senate seat has rotated every six years between a Republican and a Democrat. Obviously, many registered N.C. Democrats vote Republican in presidential and U.S. senatorial elections as shown by the election results over the past three decades.

Another consideration is that almost one out of every 16 primary voters indicated “no preference” in their 2000 presidential primary vote. This may have been a reflection of some voters’ views that the presidential primary races were already over. This “no preference” voting was most prevalent in the Democratic primary where nearly one out of every 11 voters indicated “no preference” in their May 2 vote. This might also be a case of some voters remaining Democratic in their registration in order to vote for specific local or statewide candidates in the primary. But they do not care about the presidential primary because they intend to vote for the Republican candidate in November. The Republican Party did not have a similar problem, as only one in every 59 voters indicated “no preference” in their primary vote.

One can see how elements of the N.C. primary foreshadowed the general election held on November 7. The high “no preference” rate in the Democratic primary and the more solid support among Bush’s Republican base were indicators of his impending electoral victory. ■

Primary and General Election Results Varied Widely

MAGGY GOLOBOY, Senior Political Science Major, UNC-Chapel Hill

If we compare the primary and general election votes for the president on a county-by-county basis, we can see how any supposed Democratic voting advantage disappeared and the real Republican advantage triumphed. Looking at the presidential primary results as if they were head-to-head contests between George W. Bush and Al Gore, Gore “won” 74 of the 100 counties to 26 “won” by Bush. This shouldn’t be a surprise as Gore received more votes in the Democratic Primary (383,696) than Bush received in the Republican Primary (253,485).

But the general election presents an entirely different picture. Bush defeated Gore by nearly 375,000 votes out of the nearly 2.9 million votes cast for the two candidates. And Gore was able to hold his winning margin in only 25 of the 74 primary counties he “won” as Bush carried the majority of the vote in 49 of the counties that Gore “won” in the primary. No county that Bush “won” in the primary shifted its support to Gore in the

general election.

There were regional differences in these shifts. Eastern North Carolina, which traditionally has been the strong base for the Democrats, partially continued that trend. In 18 eastern counties, Gore held his Democratic Primary “win” through to a general election victory there. However, 24 of the eastern counties switched from a Gore primary “win” to a Bush general election victory. This eastern North Carolina shift accounts for nearly half of the counties in which such a shift occurred.

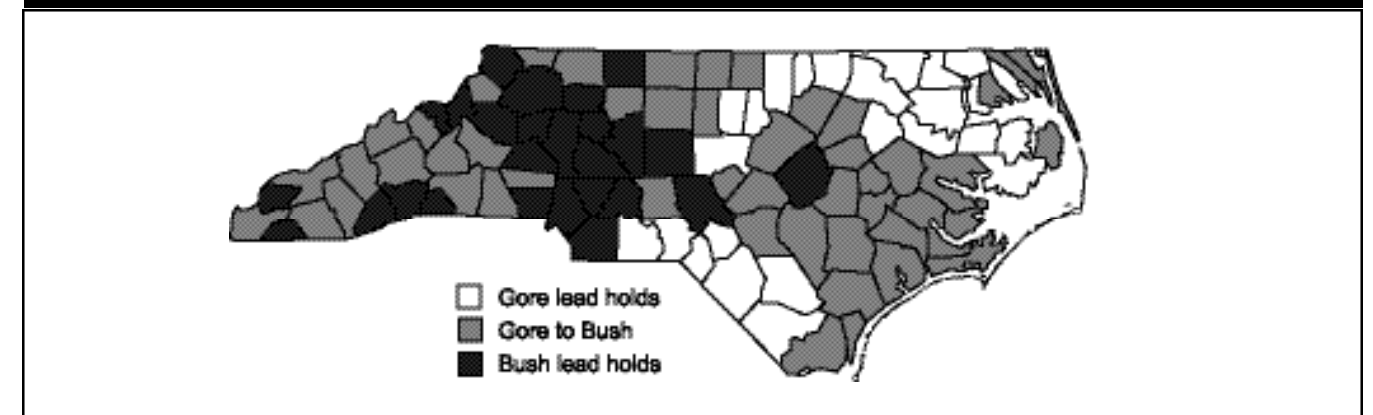
In contrast, the traditionally Republican western part of the state was a definite stronghold for Bush. Fourteen of the counties stayed with a Bush “win” throughout the primary and general election. The 15 counties that Gore “won” in the primary all switched to support Bush in the general election. Thus, no western county ended up with a Gore win in the general election. This is in

stark contrast to the serious inroads that Bush made in the traditionally Democratic east.

The Piedmont continued in its split voting for both parties, but with a decided bias. While Gore “won” well over half of the Piedmont counties in the primary, he ended up only winning one-third of them in the general election. Bush outdid him in the Piedmont counties by a 3-to-1 ratio last November.

From these county-by-county comparisons we learn the Democratic and Republican Primaries cannot be adequate predictors for the outcome of a general election. The primary voting turnout rates are too low, and differences between the two parties leads to incomparable data. The only true things the primary vote predicted was which candidate would receive the party nomination in the party’s convention. But, as noted, these comparisons do provide some interesting hints of voting trends in the state. ■

Bush v. Gore — The Primaries and the General Election



→ DIFFERENCES FROM PAGE 9

of the youngest age group – 18- to 29-year-olds – by two points. It was a slim margin in one of the demographic groups that has traditionally been a Democratic stronghold.

In the South, Bush won every age group handily. His smallest margin of victory was in the 18- to 29-year-olds, which he won by 8 percentage points. His largest was in the 30- to 44-year-old age group, which he won by 16 percentage points.

North Carolina followed the South’s trend in this category. All the age divisions went to Bush, with a staggering 26-point margin in the 60-and-older age group.

Nearly twice as many blacks live in the South as in the nation as a whole, and 91 percent

of the blacks in the South voted for Gore, one percentage point more than the nation as a whole.

Southern whites were 13 percentage points more likely to vote for Bush than were whites in the nation as a whole. North Carolinians followed the South in this trend. Two-thirds of the state’s whites voted for Bush. This supermajority of whites contributed to Bush’s wins in North Carolina and the South.

In North Carolina, blacks were the only group that voted for Pat Buchanan in statistically significant numbers, which is interesting considering Buchanan’s conservative stance. Otherwise, North Carolina blacks followed the voting patterns in the nation and in the region. ■

→ TICKET SPLITTING FROM PAGE 9

while Easley benefited from the good feelings voters have for the long-running Hunt governorship. Note these job approval ratings from statewide polls. Clinton’s job approval rating in the 2000 VNS exit poll was at 50 percent positive. Hunt’s job approval rating in a Mason-Dixon poll taken earlier in the year was 68 percent positive.

Though the pattern of split-ticket voting has been rather consistent over the last few elections in North Carolina, Easley benefited from not campaigning with Gore, while Vinroot suffered from being unable to grab a ride on Bush’s coattails. Could it have been the “Charlotte Hex” still at work in the electorate that hurt Vinroot, or was Easley just a better candidate? ■

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Publisher's Note

FERREL GUILLORY, Director

Does high school athletics foster, or impede, public school reform? What can the academic side of high school learn from the athletic side? What issues do sports pose to education leaders?

Twenty-five educators spent two days in May considering these and related questions at a roundtable discussion cosponsored by the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life and the Principals' Executive Program of the Center for School Leadership Development. The gathering took place in the Freedom Forum Conference Center of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The education reform and athletics roundtable did not attempt to draft an agenda, but rather it was designed to identify issues that deserve further research and deliberation. Here, for example, are some issues that emerged:

- High schools face both a teacher shortage and a coaching shortage, with North Carolina having more non-faculty coaches than ever.
- In general, athletes have high grade-point

averages and lower drop-out rates than their peers. Team sports illustrate the advantages of low student-teacher ratios, and mentors with clear standards.

- Playing seasons have lengthened to the extent that playoffs end just before the Christmas break and intrude on test schedules in the spring.
- High schools are likely to confront challenges in dealing with foreign players, sports agents and apparel companies.

Special presentations were made by Charlie Adams, executive director of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association; UNC President Emeritus Bill Friday, who reported on the work of the Knight Commission in intercollegiate athletics; and John Dornan, president of the Public School Forum of North Carolina. Dr. Gerald Ponder, chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, invited the NCHSAA to become a stronger force for education reform. ■