

Chapter 13 – Voters Regret? The 1948 Election

Ninety-four newly-minted representatives, 63 Republicans and 31 Democrats, took the oath of office on January 3, 1947, joined over the course of the 80th Congress by eight specially elected Republicans, six Democrats, and one American Laborite. These 107 men and two women were reduced through ambition, retreat, defeat, and death to 66 Republicans, 32 Democrats, and the lone Laborite, with election day, November 2, 1948, approaching.

The 1946 election had come unto Republicans as rain after their long electoral drought. It came not as a cooling plash but rather to quicken the righteous rivers of Republican reconquest of the country. Despite a flood of investigations of the Democratic administration and a deluge of bills to reverse the collectivist path of national policies, the Republican Congress had but diverted the New Deal into narrower channels. Moreover, that Congress worked with the Truman Administration to meet the alarming threat of Soviet advance with massive foreign aid, military reorganization, rearming, and re-conscription.

Republican representatives would put the best spin on their work and be ready to meet the electorate at the polls. If they had failed to reverse the New Deal, they avoided withdrawing most of its benefits from the voters, whether the candidates felt that was good for the country or not. If they had not managed to purge the corruption and embedded communists of the Administration, they nevertheless retained these targets of opportunity for their campaigns.

Any numeric appraisal, however, of the chances of the Republican Party retaining control of the House could not inspire confidence. On the opening day of the 80th Congress there were 245 Republican representatives, 187 Democrats, one Laborite, and two vacancies, to be filled by a Democrat and a Republican, though only the Democrat was certain.¹ Including these two, there were 16 special elections to fill vacancies before election day on November 2, 1948. In each case, except for the Laborite taking a Democratic seat, there was no party change resulting from the special election. While the Democrats had a loss, the Republicans had no gain in a year in which they were optimistic to turn the presidency.

History looked bleak. The Democrats, going into the election, counted eight states with 54 House seats in which no Republican candidate for representative had won since 1918.² Against this there was one state, Vermont, which had remained equally adamantly Republican, and the Granite State elected but one representative. The Republicans did have fourteen other states with no current Democratic representatives, while the Democrats tallied only five, but the body counts there were similar – 51 Republican representatives and 46 Democrats.³

There was the Southern revolt against Pres. Harry Truman. Dissident Democrats formed a presidential ticket of Governors from South Carolina and Mississippi on July 17, 1948, and put electors on the ballot in thirteen states but were reluctant to abandon the Democratic Party. Democratic representatives inclined to be Dixiecrats remained on the November ballot as Democrats.⁴

¹ Robert Jones of Alabama had not yet faced the special election, but there was no Republican opponent.

² Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina.

³ Republican states were Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Democratic states were New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia.

⁴ Heard, 21. Frederickson (2001), 267. Electors were on the ballot in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia and received a substantial number of write-in votes in Maryland.

On the opposite wing of the Democratic Party, groups supporting Henry Wallace did organize not only a presidential ticket but a Progressive Party and sponsored 116 candidates for the House in 23 states, who would presumably take votes away from Democratic candidates. But most of these candidacies, 78, were in districts held by Republican representatives, not threatened Democratic incumbents.⁵

The Republican Party was defending 245 seats in the House; 21 were missing an incumbent. Thomas Owens of Illinois had died. Seven, including Wallace Chadwick and James Scoblick of Pennsylvania, had failed of renomination. Thirteen, including William Lewis of Kentucky and Mitchell Jenkins of Pennsylvania, had retired or run for other office.

Sixty-two Republican seats were below the arbitrary but commonly accepted threshold of security. That is, they were won in 1946 or subsequent special elections with less than 55% of the vote. Among these were 36 seats held by the Class of '46. Of these competitive seats, 58% were Class districts. Put another way, 51% of Republican Class seats were competitive on the basis of the last returns.

If Republican nominee Thomas Dewey won the presidency, if he won big, if he swept other Republicans in with him to the Senate, to governorships, to the House, then all these numbers were moot. The final polls of the election showed Dewey winning, Gallup by five points, Crossley by nine, by 201 electoral votes according to fifty political writers polled by *Newsweek*, but would this be enough to keep Republicans in control of the House?⁶

Seventeen of the Republicans in the Class looked safe. They had won big in the previous elections and had succeeded representatives who were Republican.

Surely, the most secure Republican in the Class of '46 was Dayton Phillips of Tennessee. He won the seat in the 1946 general election without opposition and, having survived a rough primary, was now set for another victory, one of the two exceptions to the Solid Democratic South. There was no Democratic candidate in 1948, in keeping with the division of the State between the two parties. Actually, there was no *official* Democratic candidate, but his "independent" opponent, Arthur Bright, was a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in July. But Bright's opposition to Truman was nationally publicized, as the Tennessee delegation voted unanimously in convention against the President's nomination. Phillips campaigned with Republican Senate candidate Carroll Reece, who had fought so hard to deny him the renomination, and Phillips was reelected with 85% of the vote.⁷

Kingsland Macy in New York had little difficulty winning re-election, though his share of the ballots dropped from 77% in 1946 to 66% in 1948. In 1946 his opponent had the nominations of both the Democratic and American Labor parties, but in 1948 Harold Worzel flew only the Democratic banner while Marjorie Viemeister was the American Labor/Progressive Party nominee. Viemeister, however, drew only 2% of the vote. Democrat Bright in Tennessee did not like Truman, and the Republican Macy did not care for Dewey. Macy blamed Dewey for his not getting the party nod for US Senate seats in 1944 as well as

⁵ Donovan (1977), 343. In New York the Progressive candidates were the American Labor candidates. The other states were Arizona, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

⁶ Donovan (1977), 431.

⁷ *Kingsport News*, October 28, 1948. Heard, 151. *Nashville Tennessean*, January 29, 1950.

this year. Mrs. Macy was reported to have said, “You have to know Mr. Dewey very well in order to dislike him.” This antagonism may have contributed to his reduction in vote share.⁸

Paul Dague in Pennsylvania faced Democrat Roger Simpson, 31, Second World War veteran and Federal commissioner for Lancaster County. Though the incumbent’s vote share would drop from 73% to 67%, he felt secure enough to spend much of his effort on Dewey’s campaign for president.⁹

Charles Potter in Michigan was a special election fill-in. He had won big from a small turnout, but the District was Republican. His Democratic opponent, Violet Patterson, had experienced a notably frustrating run for public office. In 1946 she was seated in the Legislature, then unseated by a Republican-dominated legislative committee that disallowed returns from one precinct because the returns had been unsealed before the legislative recount. In the summer of 1948 she came in third out of three in a run for Michigan’s Democratic National Committeewoman.¹⁰ Her luck held as Potter racked up 64%. This was only a couple of points lower than the late Fred Bradley took in the District in 1946 but a six-point drop-off from Potter’s special election win.

Edward Jenison faced a changed district as did all the other representatives in Illinois but one. The 1947 redistricting that finally revised the 1901 districts took away Jenison’s two best counties, and five of the six counties new to him would support his opponent, Democrat Wayne Cook. Cook, 36, was an attorney and wounded War veteran who had spent two years in Army hospitals. Though he ran an active campaign, he was a first-time candidate and not an organization man, and Jenison prevailed with 52% of the vote, though this was a thirteen-point drop from his showing in 1946.¹¹

Norris Cotton in New Hampshire also encountered a falloff in his vote, but without redistricting. He faced a Progressive candidate, but that university student’s 1% of the vote contributed little to Cotton’s loss of ballots. The Democratic nominee, Richard Leonard, 28, was a first-time candidate, War veteran, and new attorney, whose father was a political veteran. He held Cotton to 57%, seven points below his 1946 figure.¹²

Carroll Kearns in Pennsylvania saw an even greater reduction in electoral performance, falling from 64% in 1946 to 55% in 1948. He had no Progressive opponent but worse luck. Kearns broke his leg on September 16, was laid up for a while, and ended up campaigning on crutches. James Kennedy, 54, his Democratic opponent, was a founder of the United Electrical Workers local in Erie. Kearns attributed his nine-point drop in large part to the Union, and the Union attributed Kearns’ victory to a red-baiting campaign run by General Electric.¹³

Walter Riehlman in Syracuse had a Progressive opponent, the American Laborite Sidney Greenberg. Richard Mosher, 36, lawyer and War veteran, was the Democratic and Liberal parties’ candidate and very much the Labor hope with a big drive for voter registration in the City. Riehlman defended his vote for

⁸ Richard Smith, 551. Wolcott Gibbs put Mrs. Macy’s statement in his “Profile: St. George and the Dragon, Thomas Dewey,” *New Yorker* (May 25, 1940), attributing it to a “crisp hostess.” Columnist Wesley Stout attributed the statement to Mrs. Macy. *Fort Lauderdale News*, July 15, 1962.

⁹ *The Lebanon Daily News, and the Lebanon Daily Times*, January 29, 1948. Federal commissioners would later be termed Federal magistrates. *The Bradford Era*, October 8, 1948.

¹⁰ *The Escanaba Daily Press*, January 10, 1947. *The State Journal*, July 12, 1948.

¹¹ *Illinois Vote*, April 9, 1946. *Illinois Blue Book 1949-1950*. *The Decatur Daily Review*, April 6, October 31, 1948.

¹² 1940 Census sSchedule, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire. *The Portsmouth Herald*, July 31, 1948. *Nashua Telegraph*, July 31, August 7, 1948; October 13, 1950.

¹³ *New Castle News*, September 18, November 11, 1948. *Warren Times-Mirror*, September 29, 1948. *Indiana Evening Gazette*, October 27, 1948. 1940 Census schedule, Erie County, Pennsylvania. ErieHallOfFame.org. Gilmore.

Taft-Hartley but ran on his support for the Marshall Plan and selective service. Mosher carried the City, but Riehlman took the election with a little over 50%, a substantial thirteen-point drop from 1946.¹⁴ The Labor drive bore fruit, but not enough. Greenberg scored 3%.

Pennsylvanian Franklin Lichtenwalter of the Allentown District had taken office as a result of a special election. Republican registration exceeded that of Democrats in the two counties of the District by nearly 26,000, and Lichtenwalter took 59% in 1948, two points down from his special election showing, but virtually the same as Republican Charles Gerlach received in the District in 1946. Democrat Wynne James, 45, an attorney and previous candidate for legislator, was said to be a "high type" candidate, in other words a non-organization man put up by the Party organization, because he was expected to have little chance of winning.¹⁵

The Progressive Party candidate for vice president was Sen. Glenn Taylor of Idaho, and both representatives from that State had Progressive opponents. John Sanborn's was C.W. "Babe" Dill who managed to gather 1% of the Second District's votes. Asael Lyman, 27, a War veteran and former POW, a realtor and farmer, was the Democratic contender and had Labor support. Columnist Drew Pearson opined that Sanborn was "worried sick," but the United Press reported that the incumbent would "win without too much trouble."¹⁶ Perhaps both were correct. Sanborn's 51% was ten points less than in 1946.

Katherine St. George of New York succeeded a man elected as a Democrat but who had caucused with Republicans in the House. She increased her winning percentage two points to 60% in 1948. There was an American Laborite candidate, Harold Chown, who took over 3%, and William Pendergast with the Democratic and Liberal party nominations, who managed only 35%. Pendergast was a union official, ran against Taft-Hartley, and embraced Truman's program. He also emphasized his and Truman's experiences as veterans against Mrs. St. George's lack. The Representative, for her part, said the Democratic Party was involved with subversive groups and if she lost it would be a repudiation of free institutions. Perhaps the name hurt the Democrat, given his invocation of Truman and the President's association with the reviled Pendergast "machine" in Kansas City.¹⁷

Wint Smith in Kansas fell half a point from his 1946 performance, this time against Democrat Leslie Davis, still at about 58%.

Donald Nicholson in Massachusetts also had little problem in 1948. Jacinto Diniz, 60, the Democratic candidate, an Azorean-American, had spent six years in the General Court. The incumbent's vote share dropped four points to 53%.¹⁸

Fragmented Manhattan politics made Frederick Coudert's victory with 58% in 1946 a 23-point win over his Democratic opponent, and he could count on similar assistance from the American Labor Party in 1948. Laborite Alvin Udell, 42, a clothing manufacturer, indeed pulled the Progressive vote, but with only 10% of the ballots. Democratic and Liberal Party candidate Arthur Sawyer, "a virtual unknown," managed a combined 37%, and Coudert had a 16-point victory with 53%.¹⁹

In Connecticut, John Davis Lodge's Democratic opponent, William Gaston, reflected Lodge in various ways. Lodge's prominent political family had a counterpart in Gaston's, whose grandfather was Governor

¹⁴ 1930 Census schedule, Onondaga County, New York. *The Post-Standard*, August 29, October 11 & 13 & 27, November 4, 1948.

¹⁵ Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Register of Births. *The Courier* (Connellsville), March 8, 1948.

¹⁶ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 1 & 17, 1948. *Nevada State Journal*, September 25, 1948.

¹⁷ *Poughkeepsie New Yorker*, July 3, 1948. *The Reporter Dispatch*, October 11 & 28, 1948.

¹⁸ 1940 Census schedule, Bristol County, Massachusetts. *The North Adams Transcript*, September 20, 1948.

¹⁹ 1940 Census schedule, New York County, New York. Citron, 40.

of Massachusetts and whose father had a string of losses there for governor and senator, including one to Lodge's grandfather. Both men were from wealthy families. Francesca Lodge's career as dancer and actress had a counterpart in Gaston's marriage to actress Kay Francis, though in the latter case the marriage lasted only two years. Both were veterans, though Gaston, 52, was of the First World War shooting variety.²⁰

Gaston ran a Taft-Hartley based campaign. The Progressive candidate withdrew from the race, "In order to unify the efforts of labor and other progressive forces...." Lodge accused the Democratic administrations of "betrayals" at Yalta, Tehran, and Potsdam and said that Truman was hampering the investigations of communists in government by Congress. He blamed the huge public debt resulting from "the tragic and destructive war" that was not the fault of the Republican Party. Gaston blamed inflated prices on the end of controls. Lodge came in at 55%, only two points off his 1946 mark.²¹

In Kansas, Herbert Meyer's vote percentage also barely dipped from 1946. He carried every county in his District but one, an amazingly even distribution for a 55% overall return. Democrat Marcus Black, 42, a machinist for an oil field supply manufacturing company, had no chance. The two Kansans in the Class confirmed a state solid in its partisanship.²²

William McCulloch of Ohio actually improved his performance by one point to 56%, but that was from a special election. He was three points shy of his Republican predecessor's regular 1946 election result. Democrat Earl Ludwig, 64, a Lima attorney, embraced strong Labor support. One possible strike against Ludwig was that he promoted Eisenhower as the Democratic alternative to Truman. Nevertheless, when Truman whistle-stopped through the Fourth District, Ludwig was by his side. It did not help.²³

The other two safe districts represented by Class Republicans, those of William Lewis of Kentucky and Wallace Chadwick of Pennsylvania, remained secure for the Party in the absence of the incumbents. Lewis' successor had no opposition. Chadwick's took 61%, five points lower than Chadwick received in 1946. Chadwick campaigned for Republicans in other Pennsylvania districts and in New Jersey. Despite his opposition to the McClure organization in Delaware County, Chadwick called for a straight Republican vote before the election.²⁴

Thirteen of the seventeen safe districts that had incumbents running and which had not been redistricted had an average Republican fall off from the incumbents' previous regular elections (i.e. not including Jenison, Potter, Lichtenwalter, and McCulloch) of six points. Republicans had won all of these safe districts, but the drop in margin indicated a tight race for Republicans who had won with less than 55% of the vote.

There were twenty Republican incumbents who either bettered the 55% threshold but were elected from districts in which they had displaced Democratic incumbents – unsafe districts, but maybe the candidates were – or had fallen below 55% while succeeding Republicans. These were not safe districts, but neither were they necessarily vulnerable. They were chancy.

²⁰ *The Bridgeport Post*, September 16, 1948. DeLong, 145.

²¹ *The Bridgeport Telegram*, August 25, September 19 & 22 & 30, 1948. *The Bridgeport Post*, September 20, 1948.

²² *Chillicothe Gazette*, November 4, 1948. 1940 Census schedule, Montgomery County, Kansas. *The Atchison Daily Globe*, August 4, 1948.

²³ 1940 Census schedule, Allen County, Ohio. *Delphos Daily Herald*, April 9, 1948. *Chillicothe Gazette*, March 1, 1948. *The Marion Star*, August 30, 1948. *The Lima News*, July 14, 1948. *The Salem News*, October 11, 1948.

²⁴ *Chester Times*, October 27 & 28 & 29, 1948.

Homer Jones of Washington looked the most secure. His 64% in 1946 was impressive against an incumbent Democrat. But Jones unseated a very leftist Democrat opposed by some in his own party. The new Democratic aspirant, Hugh Mitchell, 41, had been a congressional aide and served nearly two years in the Senate, when his boss was elected Governor and appointed Mitchell to his vacant seat, which he then lost in the 1946 election. He had been a leader of the dump Truman movement and a partner with Hubert Humphrey on the Democratic National Convention platform committee in successfully pushing a stronger civil rights plank. This did not dissuade a Progressive candidate, William Pennock, 33, president of the Old Age Pension Union, from running, but he took only 2%. Jones' vote dropped from a supposedly safe 64% in 1946 to 47% in 1948 against a more conventional leftist who looked moderate next to Pennock. Pennock would be charged with sedition in 1952 and would admit on trial that he was a communist. He would die in the sixteenth week of his trial, officially from suicide.²⁵ Jones lost by four points. This loss at the head of a list of chancy incumbents bodes ill for the rest.

Hardie Scott's 62% in Philadelphia against a nonincumbent in 1946 proved sufficient to insulate him in the previously Democratic District and mitigates the warning of Jones' loss. But he dropped ten points against Maurice Osser, 37, an attorney, a Coast Guard veteran, and a Democratic ward leader.²⁶

Kenneth Keating of Rochester was challenged by a sick man, George Rogers, from whom he had taken the seat in 1946. Rogers, only 61, had been "in poor health for some time" and would die 18 days after the election.²⁷ He served only one term in the House but had had a lengthy political career in Rochester. Whether he could campaign or not, his name recognition may have been partly responsible for reducing Keating's showing by nine points to a close but winning 51%.

Howes Meade of Kentucky had no worry of facing the Democrat he unseated in 1946. Andrew May was convicted in July 1947 of conspiracy to defraud the Federal government and of bribery in arranging for awards of government contracts. Rather, Meade's opponent was Democrat Carl Perkins, 36, lawyer, War vet, and experienced politician and appointee. Meade, from a district with many United Mine Workers (UMW), had voted to recommit and against Taft-Hartley but then voted for the conference report and to override Truman's veto of the bill. Also, to his subsequent embarrassment the Representative did not support a Federal flood control project to build Dewey Lake in his District. Apologizing, he said his opposition was because it had been sponsored by May, an admission of anti-bipartisan service to constituents. He then came to the project late, and it would be built in 1949.²⁸ Perhaps these actions defeated him, but more than likely his victory in 1946 was a fluke due to May's speculation and the general "had enough" political environment. May had served eight terms. Perkins, who held Meade to 40%, an amazing 20 points below his 1946 mark, would serve 17 terms. It most definitely was not a Republican district.

Ellsworth Foote appeared to be the most secure of the five new Republican representatives from Connecticut with 59% of the vote in 1946. There was a Progressive Party opponent in 1948, John Marsalka, 42, of the Yale faculty, which should have cut into the Democratic vote.²⁹ John McGuire, the Democratic candidate, also 42, was in insurance and Democratic politics and lowered Foote's vote ten points to 49%.

²⁵ *The Oregon Statesman*, July 6, 1948. *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, July 12, 1948. William J. Pennock, Certificate of Death, Washington State Department of Health, August 6, 1953. *Capital Journal*, January 28, 1948. *Herald and News*, September 18, 1952. *La Grande Evening Observer*, August 3, 1953. *Medford Mail Tribune*, August 5, 1953.

²⁶ *The Philadelphia Inquirer Public Ledger*, November 1, 1948. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 2, 1995.

²⁷ *Winona Republican and Herald*, November 20, 1948.

²⁸ Grossman, 223-4. Fenton (1957), 66. *The Courier-Journal*, July 3, 1947. Crowe-Carraco, 6.

²⁹ *New Castle News*, September 23, 1925. *Kingston Daily Freeman*, November 12, 1948. Marsalka would be fired in 1949 by Yale, he saying it was because he was a communist.

Marsalka took 2224 votes, not enough to keep McGuire from beating Foote by 1139 votes or seven-tenths of a percent.

Charles Russell in Nevada also seemed likely to have a secure margin, with 59% in 1946, but in a previously Democratic district. His Democratic opponent in 1948, Walter Baring, 36, a War veteran, was in the family furniture business in Reno. Baring, a City Councilman, made Taft-Hartley his major issue and received active Labor support. Russell mirrored Foote, dropping ten points; but without a Progressive candidate to cut into his total, Baring won by 761 votes, more than a full percentage point in the sparse Nevada electorate.³⁰

Thruston Morton in Louisville reportedly “ran like a ‘skeered rabbit’” and needed to, campaigning largely against Truman. His Democratic opponent, Ralph Logan, 37, an attorney, was a novice candidate but the son of a man who had been a US Senator and Attorney General of the State. He differed with Morton on Labor, housing, and price control issues. The Progressive candidate, an African American attorney, did little damage to Democratic performance, taking only 371 more votes than the Prohibition Party candidate. The Dewey campaign came to town, but the presidential candidate failed to even mention Morton, who nevertheless prevailed with 53%, a fall-off of five points from 1946.³¹

George Sarbacher in Philadelphia may have been ostracized by some fellow Pennsylvania Republicans for campaigning against Wallace Chadwick, but would that lose him votes? He received a supposedly secure 57% in 1946, but it had been a Democratic district. William Green, who was labeled a communist front man then, made a try to regain his old seat and succeeded – barely. Sarbacher lost by a little more than one point, Green ahead by 2214 votes.

Caleb Boggs, Delaware’s only representative, took the seat from the Democrats in 1946 with 56%. His Democratic opponent in 1948, Carl McGuigan, 51, was a member of the Brotherhood of Railroad and Steamship Clerks and had served in the General Assembly. He ran an aggressive campaign, saying Republicans were out to create “big business” monopolies that would cause an economic “collapse,” which could lead to “fascism.” His attack was broad-based, not focused on Taft-Hartley while condemning it and not attacking Boggs specifically until late in the campaign. Boggs, in his turn, did not appear to accuse McGuigan of anything, much less communism, but rather attacked the New Deal broadly, claiming the 80th Congress had eliminated 76,000 rules and regulations regulating individual and corporate lives. The incumbent eked out a win with 51% and was the only statewide Republican victory that year in Delaware.³²

Republicans Charles Fletcher, John Allen, and Richard Nixon all won in California in 1946 with 56%. Nixon, in the Los Angeles area, with both the Republican and Democratic nominations in 1948, did not campaign for himself but spent his time helping other Republican candidates. He did have a Progressive opponent, Una Rice, 43, wife of a railroad employee, who had one of the better electoral performances of her party.³³ Voters who eschewed Nixon had little elsewhere to turn and gave her 12% of the vote.³⁴

While Nixon faced an unknown housewife, Allen in Oakland was confronted by a star in liberal Christian circles. Buell Gallagher, a Congregational minister, who had been president of African American

³⁰ 1940 Census schedule, Washoe County, Nevada. *Nevada State Journal*, June 6, 1948. *Reno Evening Gazette*, November 4 & 6, 1948.

³¹ *The Courier-Journal*, October 13 & 17 & 21, 1948; October 29, 1950. 1940 Census schedule, Jefferson County, Kentucky.

³² *Wilmington Morning News*, September 22, October 15 & 29, 1948.

³³ Conrad Black, 105. 1940 Census schedule, Los Angeles County, California. California Death Index.

³⁴ One percent of the vote was reported as “Scattered.”

Talladega College in Alabama for ten years and would be a director of the NAACP from 1934 to 1976, was more widely known as the author of *Portrait of a Pilgrim: A Search for the Christian Day in Race Relations*. Gallagher was 44, white, and a pacifist. In 1948 he was on the faculty at Pacific School of Religion and was the nominee of both the Democratic and Progressive parties. Allen lost five points from his previous showing but held on for the win.³⁵

Charles Fletcher in San Diego faced two opponents, Clinton McKinnon, a Democrat, and Harry Steinmetz, a Progressive. The latter, a professor at San Diego State University, announced he was withdrawing in favor of McKinnon, but his name remained on the ballot, and he took 1% of the vote. Curiously, both Steinmetz and McKinnon reported their cars stolen days before the election. McKinnon, 42, was a publisher of newspapers, including a San Diego daily, which likely helped his campaign. His attempt to buy the New York City paper *PM* in March ran afoul of the Newspaper Guild, and McKinnon's Labor support in San Diego was tepid. Truman came to San Diego on September 24, complete with a five-mile parade through town witnessed by 25,000 or 40,000 depending on varying newspaper reports. Newspaper evaluations of Fletcher's campaign were as lukewarm as Labor's support of McKinnon, and the drop in Fletcher's vote was substantial. He dipped 13 points and proved to be a congressional one-term.³⁶

Antoni Sadlak, representing Connecticut at large, also took 56% of the 1946 vote. In 1948 he faced not only a Democratic opponent, Fred Trotta, and a Progressive, Nicholas Tomassetti, but a Socialist, who got 1% of the ballots. Tomassetti had spent ten years in the General Assembly and beat the Socialist, but his vote still rounded to 1%. Trotta, 43, an attorney, was a former City court judge in New Haven but new to statewide politics. It was a close election, *The Hartford Courant*, in its early editions the day after the election, reported that Trotta won. But Sadlak escaped by nearly 4000 votes, his share declining to 49%.³⁷

The partisan back-and-forth in the Second District held as Horace Seely-Brown joined fellow Nutmegger Foote in the losers' column. The Democrats renominated Chase Going Woodhouse, 58, who lost the seat two years earlier. She apparently had not returned to college teaching after her defeat but continued as a leader in Democratic women's organizations and worked with the occupation government in Germany on women's issues. The Progressives nominated someone, but that candidate withdrew and the Party endorsed Woodhouse. Her divorce from her husband during the campaign presumably did not hurt her, nor did Thomas Dewey's campaigning with Seely-Brown help him. The incumbent shed seven points to 48%.³⁸

Ralph Harvey of Indiana did not have a district problem. His predecessor, a Republican, had served four terms, but Harvey took the special election with only 54%. During the 1948 campaign he "warned that public housing, socialized medicine, and Federal aid to education are movements in the direction of socialism." A newspaper reported, "He viewed the clamor for public housing as an 'insidious threat' to the American philosophy that a citizen should be responsible for his own welfare." His ads stated that the Kremlin had its "stooges entrenched in the bureaucracy of Washington." Robert Oliver, War veteran, attorney and Democratic functionary, barely moved the needle from Harvey's special election. Harvey

³⁵ Ohles, Ohles, and Ramsay, 122-3. *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 13, 1939.

³⁶ *San Mateo Times and Daily News-Leader*, March 13 & 22, 1948. *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, October 27, November 4, 1948. *Santa Cruz Sentinel-News*, October 12, 1947. *The Fresno Bee the Republican*, March 16 & 23, September 24, 1948. *The Bakersfield Californian*, March 19, 1948. *The Modesto Bee and News-Herald*, September 24, December 30, 1948. *The Chula Vista Star*, May 14, October 8 & 29, 1948.

³⁷ 1940 Census schedule, New Haven County, Connecticut. *The Hartford Courant*, October 31, November 4, 1948.

³⁸ *The Hartford Courant*, March 10, April 18, October 2 & 30, 1948.

won with 52%, seven points lower than the late Republican Raymond Springer received in the District in 1946.³⁹

James Patterson was apparently the least secure of the five Connecticut members of the Class, based on his 1946 vote share of 53%. Foote, the most secure at 59%, lost. Seely-Brown at 55% lost. But Lodge (57%) and Sadlak (56%) won. Patterson's challengers included a Progressive, a Socialist, and Democrat Vincent Kiernan, 42, an advertising manager with a gas and electric company. Kiernan had served in the General Assembly for six years and as Derby City court judge, but he was a reluctant candidate. This may have helped Patterson, who was returned with only a two-point drop to 51%.⁴⁰

William Crow of the Pittsburgh area succeeded a Republican but received only 53% in 1946; so, we have placed him in this category of chancy Republicans, but that Republican had been a winner in a special election in 1946 to replace a dead Democrat. Crow might better belong in the vulnerable list of incumbents, but he did have some hope of returning to Congress because of factionalism in the Democratic Party. The regular organization was still contending with John Rankin, whom Crow defeated in 1946, and with a new third group led by Anthony Cavalcante and United Mine Workers leader Thomas Kennedy. Both Rankin and the Cavalcante-Kennedy group were to the left of the regular organization. Cavalcante, 51, a counsel to the UMW and who was "severely wounded" in the First World War, emerged as the Democratic nominee and took the election. Crow lost seven points and ended with 46% of the vote.⁴¹

The campaign of E.A. Mitchell of Indiana was punctuated by his joining a congressional investigation of charges that the United Electrical Workers (CIO) local in Evansville was communist-dominated. The Union was striking the Bucyrus-Erie plant, and, whatever the correctness of the accusations of communism, the investigation looked as if the Representative was picking sides in the strike. Democratic challenger Winfield Denton, 52, War vet, attorney, former legislator, and son of a former congressman, concentrated his campaign on criticizing the Republican record on Labor. Dewey visited the District without making a public appearance, while Truman made not one but two whistle-stops in the District. Mitchell lost eight points and fell to 44%.⁴²

Russell Mack in Washington, who had won a special election in 1947 with 51% of the vote, improved by a point in 1948 to defeat Democrat Charles Savage, now 42, whom he had also beaten the year before. Mack's performance in 1948 was two points below the Republican vote in 1946.

Glenn Davis in Wisconsin, also coming off a special election, defended the Taft-Hartley Act and explicitly disparaged the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill. His opponent, Democrat Horace Wilkie, 31, an attorney, took the opposite positions. What personal reputation Wilkie had at his age had come from his work on housing for veterans. A Progressive candidate, Alex McCulloch withdrew from the ballot, it was said, to avoid "splitting the liberal vote," but then said he was not sure he would support Wilkie.

³⁹ *The Kokomo Tribune, the Kokomo Dispatch*, October 14, 1948. *National Road Traveler*, October 28, 1948. *Rushville Republican*, October 7 & 27, 1948. *The Terre Haute Tribune*, October 13, 1948.

⁴⁰ 1940 Census schedule, New Haven County, Connecticut. *Naugatuck Daily News*, September 20, October 27, 1948.

⁴¹ *The Morning Herald* (Uniontown), January 29, 1947; October 31, 1966.

⁴² *The Daily Clintonian*, September 8, 1948. *The Indianapolis News*, September 11, 1948. *The Muncie Star*, September 12, 1948. *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 19, 1948. *The Indianapolis Star*, October 22, 1948. *The Kokomo Tribune, the Kokomo Dispatch*, October 26, 1948.

Perhaps the liberal vote was not split, but Davis improved his special election showing three points to 54%, still nine points below the 1946 vote for his Republican predecessor.⁴³

The one vacant district that falls in this category of chancy Class Republicans is that of the deceased Thomas Owens. The 1947 Illinois redistricting divided his District among three new districts. The one new District wholly within his old District elected Chester Chesney to the 81st Congress, a Democrat.

Results were decidedly mixed among the twenty incumbents on the chancy list, ranging from a loss by Homer Jones who had had the biggest win to a victory by Glenn Davis with the smallest, but in a special election. Excluding Davis and the other two special election winners, Harvey and Mack, the average fall-off in 1948 from their 1946 wins was seven points, only one point more than in the safe districts. If we omit Nixon, who had the Democratic as well as the Republican nomination, the drop was nine points. Nine of the twenty incumbents from the chancy districts lost, 7 from the 14 Democratic districts and 2 from the 6 Republican districts.

While the figures in the previous paragraph would seem to indicate a Republican bloodshed for the remaining 29 incumbents, all of whom were elected to the House with fewer than 55% of the vote in districts previously held by Democrats, there is one number that provides a caution. Only half of the Democratic districts won by Republicans with over 55% reverted to Democrats. It seems that not every Democrat who voted Republican in 1946 regretted that choice.

Frederick Muhlenberg of Reading, Pennsylvania, had missed the semi-magic 55% by only four-tenths of a percent. Furthermore, he was helped on the left side of the potential Democratic vote, not by a Progressive, but by the same Socialist candidate who had taken 4% in 1946. Democratic candidate George Rhodes, 50, was himself a former Socialist, a Labor official, and a veteran of the First World War. Perhaps his past allegiance helped to lower the Socialist take by a point. Rhodes defeated Muhlenberg by four points, dropping the incumbent eight points to 46%. "Republican leaders failed to go into the hustings in forthright defense of the Taft-Hartley act," according to one political column.⁴⁴

Charles Kersten of Milwaukee had another contest with his predecessor, Democrat Andrew Biemiller. Biemiller, 42, would list himself as a public relations counselor during the period of the 80th Congress. Accused in the 1946 campaign of having been a communist, he sought to project a middle way between communism and "laissez faire capitalism" in his campaign. Kersten, who acquired a reputation in Congress as a cold warrior, focused more on Democratic waste in this campaign. Kersten took 45%, losing nine points from 1946 and the election.⁴⁵

The State of Washington produced a winner for this embattled bunch, as Thor Tollefson in Tacoma more than held on, increasing his vote share by a point to 55% in 1948. Democrat Jack Knudsen lost four points to Progressive Thor Olson, but that was not the difference.

Donald Jackson in Los Angeles had not done quite so well in 1946 as his fellow southern California Classmates, but he showed them up, well, not Nixon, in 1948. He improved his electoral performance, bumping three points to 57%. His opponent was his predecessor, Ellis Patterson, 50, who was the nominee of both the Democrats and the Progressives. That did not help.

⁴³ Waukesha Daily Freeman, July 13 & 26, October 1 & 11 & 16 & 25, 1948. 1940 Census schedule, Dane County, Wisconsin.

⁴⁴ *Chester Times*, December 31, 1948.

⁴⁵ *The Rhinelander Daily News and the New North*, October 28, 1948.

There might have been a rising Republican tide on the West Coast, but not so in Queens. Robert Nodar also faced his predecessor, James Delaney, 47, as well as an American Laborite/Progressive who took 6%. Delaney had the Democratic and Liberal party nominations and sent Nodar back to clerkdom. Nodar took 39%, a big 14-point decline from 1946.

Albert Reeves' victory in Kansas City in 1946 had been a fluke, and his 1948 campaign was anachronistic. While the Pendergast organization and corruption were not dead in Jackson County, its heyday was over. Yet Reeves continued to run against the machine, while the Pendergast candidate lost the Democratic primary to Richard Bolling in 1948. Bolling, 32, had lived in Kansas City only since getting out of the Army after the War and, according to columnist Marquis Childs, ran "a forthright, hard-hitting liberal-New Deal campaign." Reeves' vote share dropped nine points to 44%.⁴⁶

Harold Youngblood in Detroit was challenged by his predecessor, Louis Rabaut, who had been ejected after 12 years representing the District. Rabaut, now 61, was an attorney and had a construction business. Youngblood dropped ten points to 43%. Drew Pearson attributed the loss to his opposition to rent control, but the more likely explanation was that Youngblood was just another 1946 Republican fluke, interrupting Rabaut's 24 years in the House for one term.⁴⁷

Gregory McMahon in Queens did not joust with his predecessor but rather with Democrat Gary Clemente, 40, a lawyer and member of the New York City Council. Clemente did not get the Liberal nomination; so, there was a separate nominee of that party as well as an American Laborite/Progressive. In the four-candidate race, Clemente received only 47% of the vote, but that was enough to oust McMahon, whose vote share dropped nine-and-a-half points to 44%.

Ernest Bramblett is ninth on this list due to his 53% in the 1946 election, but he had no worries this time. Like Nixon he won the nomination of both the Republican and Democratic parties. He did have a Progressive opponent, Cole Weston, 29, War veteran and partner with his noted photographer father Edward Weston, who had developed Parkinson's disease.⁴⁸ Weston's 14% of the vote was a good showing for a Progressive, particularly in light of the fact that there was after all a Democratic candidate. George Outland, whom Bramblett displaced in 1946, and who lost the Democratic primary vote to Bramblett in 1948, made a run as a write-in candidate, and fared the fate of most such efforts. Outland got 6%, and Bramblett easily took the victory.

The West Virginia District of Republican Francis Love was not a one-party district, but Democrats were gaining.⁴⁹ Democrat Robert Ramsay had represented the District for three terms in the 1930s and a single term in the 1940s, separated by a Republican victory. Democrat Matthew Neely had then taken over for a term, and Love had defeated him. Now, in 1948, Neely was running for the Senate, and Ramsay returned to contend for his old seat. He was 71 and spent the interim as an assistant attorney general of the State. Love was another of the Republican ten-point shedders, in his case to 43%.

Robert Tripp Ross, the third Queens Republican from the Class, also faced someone new in 1948, Vincent Quinn, 45, an assistant US attorney. Quinn got notable publicity from that job, presenting evidence on communist espionage to a grand jury for a year, which led to the indictment in July 1948 of twelve alleged agents. He also prosecuted a Nazi propagandist, who was sentenced to life in prison for

⁴⁶ Fenton (1957), 133-5. Larsen and Hulston, 176-7. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 29, 1947; December 2, 1948. Cramer. President Truman endorsed the Pendergast candidate in the primary.

⁴⁷ Drew Pearson, November 9, 1948.

⁴⁸ *Santa Maria Times*, March 29, 1948. *The Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2003.

⁴⁹ Fenton (1957), 112, 114.

treason in June 1948.⁵⁰ Quinn got the Democratic and Liberal nominations. Ross's showing dropped from 53% to 43%, joining McMahon and Nodar out of office, while an American Laborite/Progressive took 7%.

Willis Bradley was the third member of the Class from Los Angeles County. Nixon waltzed into his second term. Bradley's electoral performance in 1946 was only one point below that of Jackson, and Jackson improved in 1948 by three points. But Capt. Bradley, who was very active in the House, particularly on maritime matters, was sent home by Democrat Clyde Doyle, whom he had beaten for the seat. Doyle had served only one term in what was not a particularly Democratic district, though it was becoming more so. Doyle, now 61, went on to eight more terms after ousting Bradley; the last term was cut short by his death. A Progressive, although strongly opposed by the CIO-PAC which supported Doyle, took 4%, and Bradley dropped eight points to 45%.⁵¹

Howard Coffin was defeated in 1948 and by a bigger drop than his Detroit colleague Youngblood, a huge sixteen points to 37%. Coffin, too, was ousted by the incumbent he beat in 1946, George O'Brien in this case. O'Brien, now 48, lacked Rabaut's overall longevity, serving three terms before Coffin ousted him and three terms afterward, but Coffin's brief success still emphasizes the quirkiness of the wins of the two Detroit Republicans. The greater swing of the vote in Coffin's case may have been due to a perception that Coffin was too old (he was now 71, while Youngblood was 41) or the differences in the districts (Coffin's District would be 24% black and Youngblood's 2% in 1950) or something else. If the African American vote was responsible, this presumably owed something to Truman's civil rights initiative.

William Dawson had a Democratic woman as an opponent, Reva Beck Bosone, 53, a municipal court judge and former legislator. She was the first woman elected to the Utah Legislature in a State which in 1948 still did not allow women to serve on grand juries. Bosone was twice divorced by 1948, though she listed her marital status as widowed. Polls indicated that men were more supportive of her than women voters. Both candidates ran conventional partisan campaigns, with Dawson trumpeting the performance of the 80th Congress and Bosone decrying it. Dawson allowed that perhaps Taft-Hartley needed changing but only to subject management to the same anti-communist affidavit as labor officials. While Dawson attacked "the 'reds and pinks' who have wormed their way into positions of power with the Federal government," his personal attacks on Bosone were limited, which she attributed to her gender." Bosone won, Dawson dropping ten points from 1946 to 43%.⁵²

Raymond Burke also lost ten points, taking only 42% of the vote in 1948. Democrat Edward Breen, 40, a War vet, insurance man, and Mayor of Dayton, took the seat, perhaps aided by Truman's whistle-stopping in Hamilton.⁵³ Breen was 27 years younger than the incumbent. The District had been partisanly iffy and would remain so.

Edward Devitt of St. Paul and George MacKinnon of Minneapolis, who both won narrowly in 1946, were ousted by candidates of a transformed Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party in 1948. The DFL's most leftist component, which had been very visible if not predominant before, was ousted by a faction led by Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey and by its own rejection of Harry Truman in favor of Henry Wallace. With anti-communism on the upswing in 1948, the purged DFL became more attractive than it had been before the upset wins of Devitt and MacKinnon.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 14, August 11, 1948. *The Ithaca Journal*, June 30, 1948.

⁵¹ *The Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1948. *The Modesto Bee and News-Herald*, October 25, 1948.

⁵² *Women in Congress*, 267. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, April 10, September 1 & 24 & 26, October 19 & 22 & 23 & 24 & 25, November 1 & 2, 1948. Clopton, 44, 101.

⁵³ *The Daily Republican*, January 11, 1946. *The Salem News*, October 11, 1948.

⁵⁴ Solberg, 111-24. Sandbrook, 47-8. Fenton (1966), 89.

In both 1948 races Taft-Hartley was the central issue. MacKinnon preferred to focus on the Truman Administration's alleged secrecy, something that had brought much attention from him on the House floor as he kept alive accusations of insider trading in commodities by Administration officials. During the debate on Taft-Hartley he was among the more moderate Republicans and in the election campaign expressed a number of reservations about the Act, but that water was over the dam. He lost to Roy Wier, now 60, whom he defeated for the seat two years earlier. Devitt lost to Eugene McCarthy, 32, a college professor, one of Humphrey's Democratic coalition, whereas Wier came out of the Farmer-Labor Party.⁵⁵ While MacKinnon's vote share dropped six points to 45%, Devitt's fell eleven points to 41%. The new Minnesota Progressives failed to run a candidate in either House race.

Robert McGarvey in Philadelphia ousted incumbent William Granahan in 1946 but with only 51% of the vote. Unsurprisingly, that was not enough to prevent Granahan's return in 1948. Still, McGarvey fell only five points, not bad compared to Scott's ten-point and Sarbacher's eight-point slippages in the City.

Melvin Snyder swam uphill in West Virginia to win the 1946 election, displacing a seven-term Democrat, and was himself removed by Harley Staggers, 41, War veteran and former Sheriff, who would go on to sixteen terms in the House. Staggers largely supported Truman policies in his campaign but did not make Taft-Hartley an issue. The District had only one coal county and a fair amount of Republican sentiment, despite its taste in national representatives. Its Democrats were largely what political scientist John Fenton would call "Bourbons," rural and conservative. Snyder's victory was a fluke in 1946; he took 45% in 1948, a drop of six points.⁵⁶

One of the three Chicago members of the Class, Owens, died after winning his primary, leaving Robert Twyman and Richard Vail. Both received 51% in 1946 and were vulnerable on that basis as well as having to run in newly reconfigured districts. Twyman kept his entire 1946 District but added another 107,000 people, which would be one-third of his 1948 population. Vail lost a little over half of his 1946 constituents and added only about 10,000 new people.

Vail faced an organization Democrat, Barratt O'Hara, 66, a veteran of the Spanish-American War and the First World War, an attorney, who had been Lieutenant Governor of Illinois and an unsuccessful candidate for governor and the US Senate. Twyman drew a reform Democrat, Sidney Yates, 39, also an attorney and a veteran, but of the Second World War. Each race also had a third contender, a Socialist running as an independent against Vail and a Progressive against Twyman. The Progressive Party endorsed O'Hara over the Socialist; Norman Thomas, chair of the Socialist Party had condemned the Wallace campaign as being controlled by communists and communist sympathizers. Twyman ran on the record of the 80th Congress in domestic affairs and against it in foreign affairs, emphasizing his opposition to the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the draft. Yates talked about Taft-Hartley, public housing, price control, and the abolition of the House Un-American Affairs Committee. Vail ran on HUAC and particularly his membership on the Committee. He opened one-man subcommittee hearings in Milwaukee on October 1, 1948, listening to accusations that a professor at the Polytechnic Institution and another at the University of Minnesota had provided atomic secrets to the Soviets. O'Hara campaigned against HUAC as well as Taft-Hartley. Vail did better than Twyman, losing only four points, while Twyman dropped by over seven, and both lost.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *The Minneapolis Star*, September 28, October 26 & 28, 1948.

⁵⁶ *Cumberland Evening Times*, November 1, 1948. Fenton (1957), 96, 112, 116, 118.

⁵⁷ Population figures are from the 1940 Census, the source of any officially reported populations for both Twyman's and Vail's various districts. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1947; February 8, July 20, October 10,

Parke Banta in Missouri had a rematch with Albert Carnahan, now 51. While the District was competitive and Carnahan had served only a single term before being discommoded, he defeated Banta handily, the incumbent falling eight points to 43%.

Edward Miller of Maryland barely won the District from another one-term incumbent in 1946, but fresh Democratic candidate Scott Beck's endorsement by the Maryland CIO-PAC was hardly an asset in this overwhelmingly rural district. Beck, 34, War veteran, lawyer and banker, and son of a Democratic leader, however, did not run against Taft-Hartley. His campaign positions were indistinguishable from Miller's and epitomized by his ad, "Aw! What the heck, vote for Beck."⁵⁸ The voters stayed with the incumbent. Miller improved his share by over a point, to 52%.

Claude Bakewell in St. Louis was challenged by Democrat John Sullivan, now 51, the man he defeated in 1946. Bakewell, who voted with his party on domestic issues but also as an internationalist, now laid out a liberal platform: An increase in the minimum wage, rent control, low-rent housing, strong anti-trust laws, enlarged social security, abolition of the poll tax, and supportive of immigration by displaced persons. Sullivan emphasized support for the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill, which had never come to a vote in the House; Sullivan charged that Bakewell did not sign the discharge petition to bring it to the floor. Bakewell had supported Taft-Hartley, and Sullivan got Labor's endorsement. One newspaper reported that 33% of the ballots in the District in 1946 had been cast by African Americans. Bakewell charged that Democratic control of Congress would doom civil rights, given the Southern share of that control. There was also a Progressive candidate in the race, Margaret Bush Wilson, a black attorney. She took only 2% and did not hurt Sullivan, who cut Bakewell's bare win in 1946 by a huge 17 points, to 34%.⁵⁹

Abe Goff ran well behind his Gem State classmate Sanborn in 1946. Sanborn hung on to his seat despite a ten-point drop in votes; Goff had no such cushion. Democrat Compton White, now 71, whose seven terms Goff ended in 1946, was back for a rematch. He ran on what he had done for the District in his 14 years in the House. Goff ran on what he did for the District in his 2 years. This was something of a mismatch. There was a Progressive candidate, Thomas Wood, who was a Democratic legislator. Idaho Democratic Sen. Glen Taylor, Henry Wallace's running mate, probably did White no harm in disparaging him. And Goff likely did himself no good by wasting his breath calling the Progressive heart "a core of tough, hard-fisted Communists."⁶⁰ Wood got 2% of the vote. So did the Wallace-Taylor ticket in Idaho. There was a substantial Labor constituency in the District, though Taft-Hartley does not seem to have been central to the campaign of either Goff or White. Goff's vote did not drop ten points, but five points were enough to send him to 46% and home to Moscow.

Hardie Scott slipped ten points but held on, the only one of the four Philadelphia members of the Class to do so. Sarbacher was ousted after an eight-point drop, McGarvey too with a five-point fall. Franklin Maloney, the last of the Class from the City, was hardly safe with his 50% in 1946. He turned his seat over to Democrat Earl Chudoff, 41, an attorney, but freshly out of seven years with the Coast Guard. Maloney also had a Progressive opponent, who took 4%, contributing to his ten-point drop to 40%.

1948. Paul Douglas, 85. *Lincoln Evening Journal*, August 23, 1948. *Freeport Journal-Standard*, October 12, 1948. *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 21, 1948. *The DeKalb Daily Chronicle*, October 1, 1948.

⁵⁸ *The Baltimore Sun*, September 22, 1948. *Denton Journal*, May 7, September 10, October 22, 1948. *The Easton Star-Democrat*, October 15 & 29, 1948. *The Daily Mail*, May 4, 1948.

⁵⁹ *The St. Louis Star and Times*, April 5, September 21, October 7 & 9, 1948. *The Daily Capital News*, September 17, 1948. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 17 & 31, 1948.

⁶⁰ Doyle, 15. *The Post-Register*, June 25, 1946; August 19, October 27, 1948. *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, August 12, 1948.

The members on this list of vulnerable Republicans are now falling below the majority line of the 1946 vote. Javits in Manhattan, the least Republican of House Republicans, won in 1946 with only 46%, an American Laborite taking 14%. In 1948, Paul O'Dwyer got the nominations of the American Labor Party as well as that of the Democrats. Javits again had the Liberal Party nomination as well as the Republican. O'Dwyer, an attorney, was the youngest brother of the current Mayor of New York City, William O'Dwyer. While Paul O'Dwyer had the endorsement of the New York affiliate of the Progressive Party, his brother was attacking the American Labor Party as being "controlled by Communists." Though candidate O'Dwyer was an attorney for striking beer truck drivers, the strike was opposed by the national leadership of the Union, and Javits got some Labor endorsements. Javits' Republican vote fell two points from 1946, but his Liberal vote increased by over six points, and he eked out a victory by a two-point margin.⁶¹

David Potts in the Bronx had won his seat in a four-way race with 44% of the vote. The field was less divided in 1948, with Christopher McGrath, the Democratic candidate, also getting the Liberal nomination. McGrath was 46, an attorney, a former legislator, and now for 13 years an elected judge of the City court. It was not the dual nominations that won the race for McGrath. His Democratic vote increased eleven points over that for Rep. Peter Quinn in 1946 and gave him enough for victory even in a four-candidate race. The Liberal vote actually fell seven points without a separate Liberal candidate. Nicholas Carnes, the American Labor/Progressive candidate and the president of a department store employees local, took six more points than Laborite Gerald O'Reilley had taken in 1946. Potts dropped ten points to 34%.⁶²

The Republican member of the Class with the lowest vote percentage in 1946 was John Brophy of Milwaukee. His 37% had beaten the Democratic nominee, Edmund Bobrowicz, by four points, who himself had topped the Democratic incumbent running as an independent by another four points. Bobrowicz was now the Progressive (of the Wallace rather than La Follette stripe) candidate, while Clement Zablocki took the Democratic nomination. Zablocki was 36, a legislator and school teacher, who was widely supported by Labor. Zablocki was conservative enough and Brophy liberal enough that New Dealer Drew Pearson supported the Republican, but liberal Americans for Democratic Action weighed in for the Democrat.⁶³ The choice was not as utterly confounding a mix-up as a columnist called the race in the District two years earlier, but close enough. Bobrowicz took only 3% of the vote, about twice that of a Socialist Party candidate, and Zablocki won going away with 56%. Brophy actually gained three points over his 1946 showing, but that was far too short.

The districts vacated by James Scoblick and Mitchell Jenkins in Pennsylvania reverted to Democrats.

Of the 29 Republican incumbents in the Class from vulnerable districts, 24 failed of reelection. The average fall in Republican percentage in the 26 districts that were not redistricted and had not been filled by special elections was six points, on a level with the safe (six points) and chancy (seven points) districts. If Bramblett is excluded, the average for the vulnerable is a seven-point drop. One could reach the conclusion that the election had nothing to do with the candidates, but rather that there was an across the board fall in Republican sentiment of six or seven points.

But that ignores the range of variation in the individual races. Apart from the 31-point improvement of Nixon and 28-point jump by Bramblett, Javits improved by five points and Howes Meade fell by 19. And

⁶¹ *The Connaught Telegraph*, September 27, 2011. *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 19, 1948. *The Oneonta Star*, October 25, 1948. *The New York Times*, September 27, 1948.

⁶² *Investigation of Communism in the New York City Distributive Trades*.

⁶³ *The Sheboygan Press*, October 4, 1948. *The Rhinelander Daily News and the New North*, October 20, 1948. *The Capital Times*, October 10, 1948. Drew Pearson, October 28, 1948. *New Castle News*, December 2, 1948.

five of the vulnerable Classmates managed to survive 1948. One was Bramblett, of course, but so did Javits, Jackson, Tollefson, and Miller.

Apart from the Class, the 1948 elections were disastrous for other incumbent Republicans who had been below 55% in 1946; 18 lost as did three in districts replacing low performing incumbents apart from Scoblick's and Jenkins' seats. Only five of these not in the Class survived.

The Republican Party that had ended Democratic rule in Congress in 1946 found itself again the minority party after the 1948 election. After a net gain of 57 House seats in 1946, the Party experienced a net loss of 75 seats in 1948.⁶⁴ Thirty-seven of the 63 Republicans who had first been elected in 1946 would not be in the 81st Congress. Seven of the eight who had had first been elected to the 80th Congress in special elections survived, the exception being voluntary retiree Lewis of Kentucky.

No Democratic members of the Class of '46 were defeated for reelection, though three failed to receive renomination and two passed on reelection for failing runs for the US Senate. Of the 32 left, eleven, all Southerners except for John Kennedy of Massachusetts, had no opposition in the general election other than write-ins. Two others, Olin Teague and Frank Wilson of Texas, faced only Progressive opponents. Wilson's took fewer than 2% of the ballots and Teague's got all of 33 votes. All these 13 but Watkins Abbitt of Virginia would have looked safe from their 1946 election results; he is included among the chancy Democrats following the safe list.

Twelve other Democrats appeared safe based on the 1946 returns.

Robert Jones of Alabama led the list, though his special election opponents had been Democrats. In 1948 he did have a Republican opponent, Henry Frahn, 27. Whatever this candidate's inclinations, his father, an architect of the same name, had been a booster of TVA as was Jones, at least in its attention to Muscle Shoals. Jones took 88%.⁶⁵

John Whitaker of Kentucky, who took office only on April 26, 1948, won reelection with 63% over Mallam Lake, 32, a Navy veteran, an elected County prosecutor, and a farmer.⁶⁶

Alabaman Laurie Battle did only a point less in 1948 against Birmingham attorney Hiram Dodd, 46. Battle had 87%.⁶⁷

Wingate Lucas of Texas had the same Republican opponent as in 1946 and improved by one point, taking 89%.

Russell Overstreet, a First World War vet, a school board member, and a loser in previous legislative and congressional races, held Carl Albert in Oklahoma to 84%, a point less than in 1946.⁶⁸

George Smathers of Miami, on the other hand, topped his 1946 performance by nine points against J.L. Wambaugh, a pharmacist. Smathers had 81%.⁶⁹

The Progressive Party candidate in Porter Hardy's Norfolk District was rare in taking a measureable vote in a Southern district – 4%. Perhaps this was partly responsible for lowering Hardy's margin five points from 1946, but the Representative still took 61% against Republican Walter Hoffman. Hoffman was 41

⁶⁴ These are numbers from the previous election and do not take into account any intervening special election shifts.

⁶⁵ *The Anniston Star*, July 25, 1930. *Kingsport Times*, June 21, 1936. *Nashville Tennessean*, November 16, 1997.

⁶⁶ *The Courier-Journal*, October 17, 1948.

⁶⁷ *The Anniston Star*, May 9, 1948. *The Birmingham News*, September 4, 1978.

⁶⁸ *Miami Daily News-Record*, October 31, 1948.

⁶⁹ *Miami Daily News*, September 22, 1944.

and an attorney who would eventually become a Federal judge. He had a streak of courage, required of a man who moonlighted as a college football referee for 21 years. The Saturday before the 1948 election he was escorted from the stadium at the University of Tennessee after calling back a Volunteers touchdown against North Carolina.⁷⁰

Less exciting, perhaps, was the win of Toby Morris in Oklahoma over George Young, a First World War vet and realtor. Young had held a number of non-elective public service jobs. Morris took advantage of Truman's whistlestop from Gainesville, Texas, to Oklahoma City to ride with him and won with 74%, an eight-point improvement over 1946.⁷¹

Despite Virginian Burr Harrison's 1946 win with 62%, he was predicted to have a close race against challenger Stephen Timberlake, 36, an attorney. Harrison's take indeed decreased from 1946, but only by two points.⁷²

In North Carolina, William Candler, 56, an attorney, challenged Monroe Redden with a campaign that called for a strong farm program, more aid for the aged, infirm, and veterans and stated, "When we deny rights to those we loathe, we imperil the rights of those we love." It would seem fair to say that the mountain Republican progressivism that on occasion challenged the moderately conservative Democratic State hierarchy bloomed in Candler and cast him to the left of Redden. North Carolina elected its most liberal governor in many years in 1948, and if Candler's approach had a chance, it was probably undercut by that winning Democratic gubernatorial candidate. Redden improved by three points.⁷³

Democrat Abraham Multer of Brooklyn was the nominee, not only of his own party and the Liberal Party, which he had represented in 1946, but also the Republican Party. The American Labor Party nominee was Lee Pressman, 42, a former CIO Council member. Brooklyn Republican leader John Crews said his party will nominate no Republican in Multer's District, declaring, "I'd rather see a Democrat elected than a Communist." Communist and fascist charges flew in the race. Multer did not quite call Pressman a communist, but Whittaker Chambers, the accuser of Alger Hiss, did. Pressman did not quite call Multer a fascist, only that the Representative supported Spanish leader Francisco Franco. Multer claimed that Pressman did not live in Brooklyn, which Pressman admitted, but his campaign continued to insist he did, just slightly outside the District. All of this was irrelevant in a campaign that Pressman was doomed to lose, but it made for good copy. Multer took 78%.⁷⁴

The districts of the three apparently safe Democrats (Bryan Dorn, Preston Peden, and Glen Johnson) who did not run for reelection in November were also filled by Democrats in 1948.

Since 18 of these safe districts were Southern and Republican competition was routinely dicey, it is not too meaningful to look at shifts in Republican performance. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the eight-point average Republican reduction in the eleven races in which these regularly elected Democrats competed in 1948 was not far off the six- and seven-point drops among the Republican members of the Class. The range, however, among these Democratic incumbents was extreme. Republicans improved in three contests, but in three others, Republicans failed to contest seats that they had sought in 1946. Two

⁷⁰ Federal Judicial Center. Sullivan, 1347. Diglib.lib.utk.edu.

⁷¹ *Miami Daily News-Record*, October 31, 1948. *The Lawton Constitution*, September 24, 1948.

⁷² *Kingsport News*, September 22, 1948. *The Decatur Daily Review*, October 8, 1948. *The Bee*, October 30, 1952. *The Progress-Index*, June 22, 1953.

⁷³ *Asheville Citizen*, October 31, 1948. *Asheville Times*, April 10, 1990. Bass and DeVries, 228-9, 233.

⁷⁴ *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 21, July 19, August 4, September 30, October 9 & 10 & 20, 1948; August 29, 1950. During the campaign, Pressman said he had never been a member of the Communist Party, but in 1950 he stated that he had joined "a Communist group" in 1934 and left it the following year, but that he did not have an ideological break with communism until the Korean War. *The Courier-Journal*, August 28, 1950.

of these, Wilson in Texas and Stanley in Virginia, were Southern, but the third was Kennedy in Massachusetts.

There were only seven Democratic incumbents in the Class from chancy districts. Three of these were chancy only because the Democrat had been elected in a special election.

The least dicey was the seat of John Blatnik in Minnesota. It was a Republican seat, but Blatnik took it with 58% of the vote in 1946, a Republican year. William Pittenger, the unseated incumbent, was expected to run again, but Pittenger barely failed to win the Republican primary. The new challenger was William Berlin. He and Blatnik were both the children of parents from the current Yugoslavia. Both had served in the Minnesota Legislature. Both had served in the Second World War in the area of the Balkans. Both emphasized the same issues in the campaign with the same general positions, though with differing fine points. But a Minneapolis paper characterized the candidates as “slugging it out toe to toe.” Blatnik was a deliberate if collateral victim of Republican attacks on Henry Wallace, causing Blatnik to forcefully reject the Progressive. On the other hand, Blatnik was aided by the concurrent run of Minnesota Mayor Hubert Humphrey for the Senate, while Berlin was hurt in the heavily unionized District by the Republican Senate candidate, who as a member of the House had voted for Taft-Hartley. Berlin did not come close, getting 33%, and Blatnik improved on 1946 by nine points.⁷⁵

In St. Louis, Frank Karsten did a whopping sixteen points better than in 1946 over new contender Charles McBride, a lawyer and alderman, taking 71%. The other St. Louis member of the Class, Republican Bakewell had dropped seventeen points.⁷⁶

Charles Deane in North Carolina faced Lafayette Williams, 34, an attorney and Second World War veteran, elected to the State Senate in 1946. Deane took 63%, a nine-point improvement.⁷⁷

Fellow Tar Heel Hamilton Jones got 60%, six points better than in 1946. His opponent was Roy Harmon, 54 on election day, a hospital business manager and three-term State Senator.⁷⁸

In Baltimore, Edward Garmatz improved on his 1947 special election showing by sixteen points, but then so did the Republican candidate John Janetzke, 64, over his party's previous candidate. An independent candidate in 1947 had taken 31%. A Progressive Party contender got 3% in 1948. Janetzke and his father of the same name had made previous unsuccessful runs for the House. The younger had been a police magistrate. In 1950 the Census would list him as supervisor of the City election board. Garmatz won with 69%.⁷⁹

Watkins Abbitt's unchallenged reelection in 1948 contrasted with his special election free-for-all in 1946 when he took 49%. There had been a Republican candidate then and two other Democrats, but not now.

Ken Regan's special election win in 1947 had been against six other Democrats, who held him to 43%. In 1948 he drew one challenger, but not a Republican. A Progressive candidate took 198 votes.

⁷⁵ *Winona Republican and Herald*, January 7, 1948. *The Bismarck Tribune*, September 14, 1948. *The St. Cloud Daily Times*, October 16, 1948. *The Minneapolis Star*, October 29 & 30, 1948. 1950 Census schedule, St. Louis County, Minnesota.

⁷⁶ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 22, 1948.

⁷⁷ *North Carolina Manual* 1947.

⁷⁸ *North Carolina Manual* 1925. *The Gastonia Gazette*, November 1, 1948.

⁷⁹ *Cumberland Evening Times*, March 5, 1941. *The Daily Mail*, April 2, 1948.

The two seats vacated through primary losses, those of Georgia Lusk in New Mexico and Hugh Meade in Baltimore remained Democratic in 1948.

It would be an understatement to say that the seven incumbent Democrats in supposedly chancy districts were barely threatened. Ignoring the seats that had been filled in special elections, there are only four that allow a comparison in Republican performance between 1946 and 1948. The average Republican drop in this small universe was ten points, but at least the Party did not pass on these contests.

An even smaller universe is that of the Democratic incumbents in the Class who seemed to be at risk of defeat based on their 1946 performances. In both cases, they took Republican seats in a Republican year; so, their vulnerability was presumably quite low in 1948.

The House record of John Carroll of Colorado attracted the attention of competing national columnists, with leftish Marquis Childs calling him “one of the most courageous men in Congress” and rightish Fulton Lewis labeling him “one of the most left-wing radicals in Congress.” Congressional Quarterly thought that Denver was “doubtful” to reelect Carroll, but Republican opponent Christopher Cusack took only 35% and conceded the election before a single precinct was officially reported. Cusack was a veteran of both world wars, a Colorado Senator, an advertising man, and would die the next year at age 53.⁸⁰

An indication of just how Democratic the 1948 trend was is the re-election of the Democratic member of the Class of '46 who had the smallest share of the November 1946 vote. Harold Donohue, elected from a previously Republican district in Massachusetts in 1946 against a Republican tide with 49.5% of the vote, a one-point margin over the Republican, coasted to victory in 1948 with 59.2% and an eighteen-point edge over John Maginnis, a businessman. Political scientist Malcolm Moos thought Donohue's success was a case of Truman's coattails in an election in which Moos thought Truman wore a very short jacket. Moos also attributed Democratic successes in heavily Catholic Massachusetts to the Republican General Court providing for a referendum that would enable physicians to distribute information on contraception. For the first time since 1856, Democrats became the majority party in the State House and also tied the Republicans in the State Senate. The new Speaker of the Massachusetts House, who would eventually become Speaker of the US House, Thomas O'Neill, would have a broader take on the victory, mentioning Truman's “long coattails,” a referendum on a right-to-work law, and his own statewide organizational work, as well as the contraception referendum, which he characterized as an abortion.⁸¹

The Republican drops were both eight points against Carroll and Donohue.

One victim of the 1948 election, but hardly of its Democratic trend, was Leo Isacson, the American Laborite from the Bronx. The Republicans were so determined to get rid of Isacson, that they gave their nomination to Isidore Dollinger, the Democratic candidate. The Liberal Party, determined to avoid any charges of collusion with the ALP and its tarring with communism, also nominated Dollinger, 45, an attorney, a legislator since 1937, and, given the importance attributed to Isacson's support of a Jewish state in Palestine, a Jew. Dollinger minced few words on allegations of communist links to Isacson and ran

⁸⁰ *Freeport Journal-Standard*, September 4, 1948. *The Bakersfield Californian*, November 2, 1948. *Kingsport News*, September 29, 1948. *The Kansas City Star*, November 3, 1948. *The Deseret News*, March 7, 1949.

⁸¹ *The Portsmouth Herald*, November 2, 1948. Moos, 38. Parker. O'Neill with Novak, 55-61.

away with a 63% win, though only 43% was on the Democratic line.⁸² For the incumbent, it was a nineteen-point drop from his February win. Since turnout increased by almost 200% from the special election, Isacson took twice as many votes as in February, while losing badly.

If voters elected a Republican Congress in 1946 because they “had enough,” as the Republican campaign slogan went, then why had they returned so abruptly to those who supposedly had sated them for sixteen years?

The Democrats had gained House seats in 1936, 1940, and 1944, all presidential election years, and lost seats in the off years of 1938, 1942, and 1946, and 1948 was a presidential year. The higher turnout in presidential years may have been the difference, perhaps because Democratic candidates appealed more to marginal voters and marginalized people. Maybe it was because Democratic presidential nominees were better candidates than Republican ones, an easy argument when one is talking about Franklin Roosevelt, a man elected four times to the presidency, or of the failings of the Republican Dewey.⁸³

Truman’s pugnacious and extensive personal campaigning in 1948 has become a classic of American politics. Against that was Dewey’s bland procession to a presumed coronation. It would be 68 years before another such presidential election would play out in the United States. Certainly, Truman’s campaign, which played to large crowds, was an asset to House members whose districts he visited, but he barely won himself. Thurmond’s capture of 39 reliable Democratic electoral votes hurt, but Wallace’s votes in New York, Maryland, and Michigan were greater than Dewey’s winning margin in each state, costing Truman a possible 74 electoral votes. Wallace’s take was also larger than the margin in California, but Truman held those 25 electoral votes with an edge of less than 18,000 popular votes. In Ohio, with 25 electoral votes, Wallace’s total was five times Truman’s margin over Dewey, but Truman had the plurality. Truman took Illinois’ 28 votes by less than 34,000; Wallace had failed to even get on that ballot. If those three states had gone to Dewey, Truman would have lost.⁸⁴

Moos in a 1952 work would conclude that Truman had limited coattails because he ran behind the Democratic House vote.⁸⁵ Prof. Moos conceded the question was not a simple one, however, and the experience of the Class of ’46 bears this out. The results of 74 campaigns of the Class in 1948 can be evaluated against the results in the presidential election.⁸⁶ In 51.5 of these districts Truman’s percentage of the vote lagged Roosevelt’s performance in 1944.⁸⁷ Since Truman ran nearly four points behind Roosevelt in the country as a whole, this is unsurprising.

⁸² *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 1, 1948. *The Post-Standard*, July 26, 1948. *The New York Times*, September 25, 1996.

⁸³ Dewey’s “talents were limited by serious flaws, by a temperament too rational for politics, a daunting competence, and an unwillingness to accept the changed rules of a game reinvented by Franklin Roosevelt.” Richard Smith, 642-3.

⁸⁴ Irwin Ross, 146-7, identified this scenario.

⁸⁵ Moos, 16, 124.

⁸⁶ Apart from the 10 members who were not on the November ballot, the presidential results in 25 of the Class by district are not readily available, these being districts that are part of metropolitan counties. Two districts in Massachusetts, that of Kennedy and Nicholson, MacKinnon’s in Minnesota, and two in Washington, that of Homer Jones and Tollefson, are evaluated in part and included in the 74. Those of Brophy and Kersten in Wisconsin are combined for evaluation and also are among the 74.

⁸⁷ Jenison’s District in Illinois was redistricted between 1946 and 1948. Truman improved on Roosevelt in Jenison’s old District and lagged behind Roosevelt in Jenison’s new District, hence, the fraction.

Of the 74 districts, in 1946 Republicans took Democratic House seats in 26. Republicans retained 8 of these 26 in 1948; in each one Roosevelt had outperformed Truman.⁸⁸ In 7 of the 18 seats (of the 26) that Republicans lost in 1948, Truman outperformed Roosevelt. Possibly, this is evidence of Truman coattails, though short.

There were also 4 seats of the 74 that had been Republican in 1944, 3 were taken by Democrats in 1946 and retained in 1948, and the other that was Republican in 1944 and 1946 shifted Democratic in 1948. Truman outperformed Roosevelt in 2 of these districts, including the one that changed partisan spots in 1948.

Of the 25 districts of the Class for which presidential results by congressional district (or a discrete part) are not available, 19 were Democratic districts in 1944 that went Republican in 1946. These were all metropolitan counties. Across the country Truman did worse in metropolitan areas than Roosevelt had.⁸⁹ In these 19 metropolitan districts, Democrats recaptured only 13 seats in 1948 – a counter-coattail effect.

Among the Republican members of the Class who had taken Democratic seats in 1946, 27 of 43 were from 100% metropolitan districts and 19 lost their seats in November 1948.⁹⁰ One, Owens of Illinois, was not on the ballot in November. The Republican Party had held only 43 100% metropolitan districts in 1944, which numbers the Class of '46 had exactly doubled in 1946. After the 1948 election they held 42. The apparent consumerist revolt of the cities in 1946 was apparently ended by 1948.

The other 16 Democratic districts captured in 1946 included 5 in Border States, 3 of which reverted to Democrats in 1948. The Republican Party lost 8 other Border States districts that year. These states between the overwhelmingly Democratic South and the heavily Republican rural North tended to blow back and forth with the political winds.

Dewey attributed his loss in large part to the farm vote breaking for Truman. Journalist Irwin Ross would cite a study by Louis Harris & Associates that documented the shift in the farm vote but would contend that it was not the difference in the presidential election. Still, Dewey lost Ohio, Wisconsin, and Iowa, which he had carried in 1944. Without these states Truman would not have had a majority of the electoral vote and the election would have devolved to the members of the House of Representatives. Whether it was the farm vote that shifted these three states may be debatable, but they are generally considered to be farm states. Rep. Clifford Hope (R KS), who served as chair of the House Agriculture Committee during the 80th Congress, was of the opinion that it was the farmers who “turned against Dewey.” “Much as I hate to admit it the farmers of this country just don’t have too much confidence in the Republican Party,” he would write. The Republican Congress had passed a bill extending 90% parity payments for crop supports for a year, but with lower supports beginning the following year. This was not a happy future for many farmers, and Truman campaigned against the lower supports, though he had signed the bill.⁹¹

With respect to the Class of '46, Republicans had not taken House seats from Democrats in the Midwestern farm belt, because there were very few to take. If one is looking for evidence of the farm shift to Truman in the Class’s House election of 1948, we are left with one case from this Belt. Mitchell of Indiana lost his seat, which had been a Republican seat before him, to a Democrat in 1948. But farm

⁸⁸ The seat won in New York by St. George was of a member elected as a Democrat, but affiliating with Republicans in Congress.

⁸⁹ Lubell, 46.

⁹⁰ The description of the districts uses the 1950 Census.

⁹¹ Donovan (1977), 438. Irwin Ross, 257. Hope, 194-6, 238-9.

employment in Mitchell's District was only 12% of total employment.⁹² If that figure could be taken as an indication of the farm vote, then we could say that 21 such House districts switched from Republican to Democrat in 1948, but not all in the Midwest. Four were in Indiana, five in Missouri, two in Ohio, and one each in Minnesota and Illinois. Then there were two in Colorado, two in West Virginia, and one each in Kentucky, Oklahoma, Idaho, and California.

Republicans held 104 congressional districts after the 1946 election with farm employment above that 12% figure. After 1948 they had 83. Republican margins in many farm districts were so substantial that they could protect against a big drop in performance. For example, Herman Andersen in Minnesota's Seventh District, which had farm employment of 47%, survived a thirteen-point fall in his voting percentage from 1946 to 1948. Joseph O'Hara in Minnesota's Second District, farm employment 38%, dropped twelve points and won. Missouri's Dewey Short in the Seventh District, 38% farm, declined eleven points and was returned to the 81st Congress. None of the seven Republican districts with farm employment over 40% fell to Democrats in 1948 and only two of the fifteen with farmers over 35%.

Rep. Short's success was in contrast to seven other Republicans from Missouri that were not reelected, including three from the Class of '46. Six, including Short, were from farm districts and all of these but Banta's had been Republican in 1944 as well. But only one other than Short had had a comfortable margin in 1946. Short's take that year had been 65%. The Show Me State's results also point up a substantial difference among states. The average fall in the Republican percentage from 1946 to 1948 in Missouri was 10.8 points, second among the states. Missourian Truman on the Democratic ballot may have had something to do with that. Kentucky had a 12.5 point drop, and Truman's vice presidential running mate was Alben Barkley from the Bluegrass State.

Truman attributed his victory to Labor, and Labor was happy to take the credit for the House shift as well. The CIO-PAC supported 215 House candidates, and 144 won. The AFL's newly organized Labor League for Political Education supported 105 of whom 86 won.⁹³ Taft-Hartley was a major issue in many campaigns. Whatever its effect on labor and management, its effect on politics was significant.

While some Republican campaigns accused the Administration or their Democratic opponents of being soft on communism, the Truman doctrine, the Berlin airlift which began in June, and the President's attack on Wallace's campaign as a haven for communists lifted a pink weight from the Democratic Party and Democrats in general.⁹⁴

Truman squeaked by Dewey by 2.2 million votes, getting 49.4% of the popular vote and 65 more electoral votes than necessary for election. The vote for Representatives went 51.6% Democratic and the new 81st House would have 263 Democrats, 171 Republicans, and one American Laborite.

Democratic candidates for the House defeated 67 Republican incumbents as well as American Laborite Leo Isacson in the Bronx. Democrats also picked up seven seats from which Republicans retired, including Jenkins' in Pennsylvania, two from which the incumbent Republican had failed of renomination, including Scoblick's, also in Pennsylvania, and the one seat vacated by a Republican death – Owens in Illinois.

Democratic losses were minimal. Three seats from which Democrats retired were won by Republicans.

⁹² Employment in agricultural occupations is from the 1950 Census.

⁹³ Irwin Ross, 255, 265.

⁹⁴ Donovan (1977), 360-1.

Of the Republicans in the Class of '46, one died, two retired, two failed of renomination, 33 were reelected in 1948, 33 were defeated by Democrats. Of the other Republicans in the 80th House who sought reelection, 123 were successful and 34 were defeated. While unsurprising that a number who had ridden the electoral wave in 1946 into the House were pulled back out by the 1948 undertow, the disproportion with more senior Republicans was substantial.

Three Democrats in the Class of '46 lost renomination, and two retired from the House to failing runs for the Senate, but the other 32 members of the Class of '46 were reelected.

The 81st House would have 33 Republican members of the Class of '46 and 32 Democratic members.