

Chapter 19 – The Triumph of Welfare Liberalism: The 1954 Election

Lockean liberalism, centered on individual freedom, modified by Keynesian liberalism and its trust in democratic government to ensure that freedom, came together in the New Deal. The freedom of the farmer to economic survival would depend on agricultural restrictions and guarantees. The freedom of labor from exploitation by the employer would be protected by support of and regulation of unionization. The freedom of the consumer from monopolistic pricing would be assured by anti-trust legislation. The freedom of the saver and the pensioner would be secured by insurance on banking deposits and by pensions. The freedom of the capitalist and entrepreneur from booms and busts would result from regulation of investment and active management of the economy. The freedom of the unemployed from impoverishment would be protected by unemployment and social insurance. The freedom of the physically or emotionally handicapped would be guarded by welfare programs. The freedom of the non-conformist in thought and body would be protected by limitations on the majority.

That the New Deal and its Fair Deal extension fell short of an ultimate success did not mean that welfare liberalism was not a revolutionary change from previous politics and government.

By the 1954 mid-term national election, the ascendancy of welfare liberalism in both major national political parties was ensured, despite retreats such as the Taft-Hartley Act and a lack of continual progress such as the failure of Pres. Harry Truman's medical care initiative. This preeminence was facilitated by the natural progress of aging, both in the electorate and in the political class. By 1954 44% of the electorate had come of voting age since the start of the New Deal. Even more compelling was that only 20 of the US representatives elected in 1954 began their service before the first Roosevelt congress, the 72nd.¹

The mid-term election of 1954 was fought much less over issues than it was over the person, rather than the Administration, of Pres. Dwight Eisenhower. His resounding election in 1952 and his continuing popularity meant that candidates of both parties, whether or not they had supported his legislative initiatives, ran as Eisenhower's supporters. Republicans contended he needed a congress of the President's party, while Democrats pointed out that it was often their delegation that brought Eisenhower's program success in the House.²

A student of mid-term elections called 1954 a "normal mid-term" in that there was a shift in congressional seats away from the current administration. Given the popularity of the head of the Administration, why was there such a shift? The President campaigned, though "the brunt of the day-to-day, grass-roots campaigning was borne by Nixon." The Vice President was much more controversial and much more partisan. For another, the upswelling in numbers of the electorate that swept Eisenhower into the White House was missing. Turnout over 1950 increased by only six-tenths of a point. Still, the popularity of Ike may have been the reason that the shift of House seats away from the Administration was the fewest since 1934.³

The result was a small shifting of the partisan needle, but enough to give the Democratic Party control of both houses. Democrats gained 19 seats in the House and two in the Senate over the 1952 results; they also picked up a Wisconsin seat in the interim through a special election. Democrats flipped 22 seats, 11

¹ *Historical Statistics*, Table Aa125-144.

² The Gallup Poll reported on September 22 that Eisenhower's approval rating was 65% versus 21% disapproval. Gallup, 1269. Shaffer.

³ Busch, 15, 153. Donovan (1956), 275-8.

held by Republican incumbents first elected in 1952.⁴ Republicans flipped five seats, three held by Democrats first elected in 1952. Eight of the net Republican losses were in the Northeast and nine in the Midwest. The Party gained seats in Florida and Texas while losing one in Virginia. Sam Rayburn returned as Speaker with a 29-vote margin over Republican Joseph Martin.

Six Class members who were in the 83rd Congress did not run for reelection. Democrat Thomas Stanley of Virginia left the House early in 1953 for a successful run for Governor, which had been his first choice of elective positions for many years. Republican Jacob Javits of New York ran and won the position of attorney general of New York State in 1954. Javits had rather wanted to be mayor of New York City, which would have necessitated leaving the House in 1953. As late as July 1953, one political columnist was reporting that four of the five Republican borough chiefs would support Javits for the nomination, but the opposition of Gov. Thomas Dewey and more conservative Republicans prevented Javits' endorsement. Years later, Javits would write that he "began to suspect that I would not want to stay" in the House "forever." "Members who do not make this break find it increasingly difficult to give up the perquisites and committee positions that come with seniority...." He added that his family's remaining in New York while his job was in Washington caused "strains on my marriage." The incumbent Attorney General was retiring, as was Dewey from the governorship, which meant Javits would not be on the ticket with the chief executive he could not get along with. The Republican Party's endorsement of Javits, however, meant Dewey's endorsement, and the choice was in large part necessitated by having someone as well known and as liberal as Javits to oppose the Democratic nominee, Rep. Franklin Roosevelt Jr. In a year that saw the other statewide Republican candidates lose, Javits upset Roosevelt.⁵

The House seat of Javits, the most liberal of Republicans, went to a Democrat in the 1954 election.

Two of the incumbent Class tried for promotion to the Senate. Laurie Battle of Alabama challenged incumbent John Sparkman in the Democratic primary, while Republican Norris Cotton of New Hampshire went after a seat vacated by the death of Republican Charles Tobey on July 24, 1953. Tobey's seat was filled by the appointment of Republican Robert Upton, 69, who seemed to be a "chair warmer" for Republican Gov. Hugh Gregg's impending candidacy.⁶

Due to family circumstances Gregg did not end up running in 1954, but Upton did. A third candidate, Wesley Powell, a staffer for New Hampshire's other Senator, Styles Bridges, and a former opponent of Tobey, entered the primary. Powell came from the right with seemingly the only issue in the race, apart from personality, being Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, for whom Powell "reiterated his all-out endorsement." While Upton allowed there were excesses from McCarthy in his anti-communist crusade and inventions, Cotton said "the senator's tactics were a threat to the GOP and the nation's prestige abroad." Cotton took 41% in the three-way primary, won the general election with 60%, and resigned his House seat effective November 7, casting his first vote in the Senate to condemn McCarthy.⁷

⁴ One of the gained Democratic seats had been held by an Ohio independent who had been a Democrat office-holder, but who voted present in the election of speaker.

⁵ Javits with Steinberg, 189, 191-3, 199, 202-3. *The Daily Messenger*, February 25, June 6, 1953. *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 28, July 10, 1953; November 3, 1954. *The Troy Record*, September 23, 1954. *The Oneonta Star*, September 27, 1954.

⁶ *The Portsmouth Herald*, August 14, 1953.

⁷ Cotton, 209, 215. *Nashua Telegraph*, October 27, 1953; August 12, 1954. *Boston Herald*, May 30, 1954. *The Portsmouth Herald*, May 25, 1954. OurCampaigns.com.

Sparkman from a very Southern state was enough of a national Democrat to have been the nominee for Vice President in 1952. Battle, with funding by the “Big Mules” industrialists and financiers of Birmingham, went after Sparkman as a turncoat to white supremacy. Alabama’s other Senator, Lister Hill, strongly supported Sparkman in the race. Battle also campaigned as something of a Southern metropolitan progressive. In the House he was a supporter of Federal aid to education. Other than his opposition to Labor, his positions were not inconsistent with the Senate records of the two Senators. Sparkman accurately defended his opposition to equal rights for black people. Battle took only 37% of the primary vote, with Sparkman getting 58% in a four-person race. Sparkman would return to the Senate, and Battle would go into the insurance business in Birmingham.⁸

Two other class incumbents chose to retire from electoral politics. Democrat Frank Wilson of Texas announced he would return to the practice of law in Dallas but in 1955 would be appointed a district judge, which he had been before his House tenure. He would be replaced in the House by a Republican, the first such House member from Texas since 1931. The departure of Republican Ernest Bramblett of California was due to his conviction relating to salary kickbacks from House employees. Bramblett’s seat remained Republican.⁹

Four of the class incumbents were renominated by convention without difficulty: Democrat Burr Harrison of Virginia and the three Republican members from Connecticut – Antoni Sadlak, Horace Seely-Brown, and James Patterson. Twenty-five others were renominated in primaries without opposition on the ballot: Democrats Robert Jones of Alabama, Prince Preston and Henderson Lanham of Georgia, Otto Passman of Louisiana, Edward Garmatz of Maryland, Harold Donohue of Massachusetts, John Blatnik of Minnesota, John Bell Williams of Mississippi, Frank Karsten of Missouri, Abraham Multer of New York, Bryan Dorn of South Carolina, Joe Evins of Tennessee, Olin Teague and Omar Burleson of Texas, and Porter Hardy and Watkins Abbitt of Virginia; and Republicans Donald Nicholson of Massachusetts, Frederick Coudert, Katherine St. George, Walter Riehlman, and Kenneth Keating of New York, William McCulloch of Ohio, William Dawson of Utah, and Glenn Davis and Charles Kersten of Wisconsin.¹⁰

Neither Russell Mack nor Thor Tollefson had a Republican opponent in Washington’s blanket primary. Mack took 61% against three Democrats, while Tollefson topped two Democrats with 56%.¹¹

The cross-filing California primaries gave Donald Jackson 85% of the Republican and 25% of the Democratic vote, and John Allen 90% of the Republican and 28% of the Democratic ballots.¹² Jackson’s one Republican opponent had contested the nomination in 1948 and 1950 as well. Allen faced no Republican opponent.

⁸ *The Anniston Star*, January 17, March 19 & 29, April 5 & 14 & 20 & 30, 1954; February 29, 1956. Bartley, 56. *The Kansas City Times*, May 4, 1954. Key (1964), 442. *Alabama Register* 1955.

⁹ *Corsicana Daily Sun*, June 8, 1954. *CQ Almanac* 1955, 393. *Oxnard Press-Courier*, June 15, 1955. *The Modesto Bee and News-Herald*, July 29, 1958.

¹⁰ *The Bee*, April 15, 1954. *The Progress-Index*, May 23, 1954. *Naugatuck Daily News*, June 29, July 1, 1954. *The Hartford Courant*, June 20, 1954. *Alabama Register* 1955. *Georgia Register* 1955. *The Monroe News-Star*, May 31, 1954. *Maryland Manual* 1955-56. *Massachusetts Election Statistics* 1954. *Minnesota Manual* (1955). *Mississippi Blue Book* 1955. *Missouri Manual* 1955. *The New York Times*, September 14, 1954. *The Delphos Courier*, May 1, 1954. *The Index-Journal*, April 8, 1954. *Tennessee Blue Book* 1956. *Texas Almanac* 1955. *The Daily Herald*, July 18, 1954. *Wisconsin Blue Book* 1956. The author was unable to find information about Paul Dague’s renomination.

¹¹ Washington Election Results.

¹² *California Statement of Vote*, June 8, 1954.

Republicans Edward Miller of Maryland and Ralph Harvey of Indiana faced minimal opposition in the primary, both recording slightly less than 90% of the vote. Miller had been prepared to leave Congress for an appointment as Federal district judge in 1953, but the Party leadership feared they would lose the seat without him, and he withdrew from consideration. Miller's opponent was Mrs. Alonsita Walker, 72, who ran against "giveaway" foreign aid programs. The internecine wars of the Indiana Republican Party were expected to produce a strong opponent to Harvey, but only a political no-name filed.¹³

Somewhat more challenged was Democrat Charles Deane of North Carolina. His opponent was Coble Funderburk, 49, a lawyer and three-term State legislator, who ran an active campaign, mostly against foreign aid. Deane got three-fourths of the ballots.¹⁴

Democrat Carl Albert of Oklahoma and Republican Carroll Kearns of Pennsylvania each took renomination with 71% of the vote. Kearns' two opponents, a jeweler and a Burgess of Mercer, split the opposing vote fairly evenly. Albert had a major and a minor opponent. Alvin Morris, who had been an elected county assessor and owned a community of twenty rental houses, several business buildings, and a sawmill, got a quarter of the vote. The minor opponent was Manley Misenheimer, now 70, who had challenged Albert for the nomination in 1946 and 1948.¹⁵

Kansas Republican Wint Smith's press in *Life* about his lack of support for Eisenhower's programs brought out one Ernest Strahan, who filed as an "inactive" candidate so Eisenhower Republicans "might have an opportunity to vote their protest" against the Representative. Strahan may have been inactive but was not unknown, having challenged Smith in the primaries in 1950 and 1952. He held Smith to 62%.¹⁶

Democrat James Davis of Georgia was the only incumbent class member seriously challenged for renomination, specifically by Morris Abram, 36, Rhodes scholar and Atlanta lawyer, who had made a name for himself as a proponent of equal rights for black people. The two candidates signed a League of Women Voters pledge to avoid "a direct appeal to racial and religious prejudice," which inhibited both campaigns. The District Democratic Executive Committee had voted to continue using the county-unit system, but Abram lost the popular vote in any event. Davis took 53%. It is worth noting that a racial "liberal" could hold a white supremacist to a limited majority in Georgia, even if this was Atlanta.¹⁷

Two Republican members of the Class of '46, who were ousted in 1952, tried for a comeback in 1954. Both Edward Jenison and Richard Vail of Illinois won their primaries with 56% and 50.1% respectively. Howes Meade tried again in 1954. Kentucky had redistricted and Meade would be running against a different Democrat than the one who defeated him in 1948. "Would be" if he had gotten the Republican nomination. It was a six-candidate race and Meade came in fifth, with only 5% of the vote.¹⁸

Jenison had the advantage over his two primary opponents in name recognition and, presumptively, in organizational support since Gov. William Stratton had been a roommate while both were in Congress.

¹³ *Maryland Manual 1955-56*. *Greenfield Daily Reporter*, May 6, 1954. *The Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1968. *The Easton Star-Democrat*, June 25, 1954. *Rushville Republican*, March 16, April 30, 1954. *National Road Traveler*, May 6, 1954. Fenton (1966), 171-2.

¹⁴ Resolution 2001-19, General Assembly of North Carolina. *The Robesonian*, November 19, 1953; May 30, 1954. *The News-Journal* (Raeford), May 27, 1954. *North Carolina Manual 1955*.

¹⁵ *Oklahoma Directory 1955*. *The Record-Argus*, February 24, March 8, May 20, 1954. *The Paris News*, July 1, 1948. *Miami Daily News-Record*, May 24, 1954.

¹⁶ *The Salina Journal*, May 13, 1954. *The Iola Register*, June 16, 1954. *Kansas Report 1955*.

¹⁷ *The Index-Journal*, December 18, 1938; October 21, 1988. *Statesville Record & Landmark*, July 8, 1965. *The Gaffney Ledger*, November 17, 1949. *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 17, 1954. *Panama City News*, June 4, 1954. *Georgia Register 1955*.

¹⁸ *Illinois Vote*, April 13, 1954. OurCampaigns.com.

Paul Wilson, 52, a life insurance man, had sought a House nomination unsuccessfully in 1950, but before redistricting pulled him into Jenison's District. This exposure gave him a leg up over the third man, a realtor, Wilson finishing with 31%. As one might expect from Jenison's apparently low level of activity in the House, it was reported that neither he nor his opponents "made any serious effort to stump the district."¹⁹

Vail, trying for his second comeback, was damaged goods, and the Party organization looked favorably on one Thomas Lewis, 35, an investment banker, wounded twice in the Second World War and wearing a leg brace as a result. Vail was not helped by his hesitation on spending more time away from his business. Nevertheless, he got the endorsements of two ward organizations, as did Lewis. The District's Young Republicans, voting on an endorsement, gave Lewis 49 and Vail 2 votes, while 35 abstained. Vail continued to run against domestic communism, while Lewis "charged that Vail has 'alienated rent payers, ... exiled all labor,' and opposed other groups...." Better known to the voters, Vail surprised some predictions by topping Lewis by eleven points with two other candidates in the race.²⁰

Three incumbent Democratic members of the Class did not survive their primaries.

Don Wheeler in south Georgia was defeated by Iris Blitch, 44% to 46%, 16 county-units to 32, and effectively by the Talmadge organization. Blitch, 42, was a three-term legislator and Talmadge stalwart there and Democratic National Committeewoman from 1948, a choice of Gov. Herman Talmadge. In 1953 she was instrumental in getting the General Assembly to permit women to serve on juries. "Waging a vigorous campaign, Mrs. Blitch charged Rep. Wheeler with lack of loyalty to the Democratic Party in his floor votes and with absenteeism in the House." A third candidate echoed Blitch's line of attack.²¹

Future Speaker of the House Jim Wright ended Wingate Lucas's House career. Wright had been a legislator for a term, a Mayor, and President of the Texas League of Municipalities. Wright ran as much against Amon Carter, the media mogul of Fort Worth as he did against Carter's representative. Lucas and Carter fought back by tagging Wright as a "left-wing conspirator" and perhaps by an indictment two weeks before the election on charges of mail fraud by Wright and his father and their advertising business. Wright still took 59% of the vote, was elected in November, and the mail fraud charge was dropped.²²

Kenneth Regan in west Texas knew that he would be challenged for renomination by J.T. Rutherford, who was completing six years in the Legislature and had been Texas Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Regan temporized about running, complaining his oil business was suffering from his absences in Washington. Rutherford did not think the oil business was suffering enough and tarred Regan as a part-time congressman. Regan did not help himself by his explanation of his vote against the Social Security bill that would extend coverage to state and local employees, after telling those workers he would support the bill; the bill had been too long to read, he said. Rutherford won by a mere 149 votes.²³

¹⁹ *The Daily Register* (Harrisonburg), January 7, 1954. *The Daily Register-Mail*, April 7, 1954. *Alton Evening Telegraph*, January 24, 1950. *The Decatur Herald*, April 15, 1954. Wilson would die in 1962 when his wife drove their car into a concrete abutment. She survived as did two of their children in the car. *The Decatur Daily Review*, June 20, 1962.

²⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 2, February 28, March 28, April 4, 1954. *Southtown Economist*, April 14, 1954.

²¹ *Georgia Register* 1955. *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 7 & 10, June 18, September 9, 1954. *The Index-Journal*, September 10, 1958.

²² Flemmons, 257-8. Lynam, 12-5. Stiteler. *Denton Record-Chronicle*, January 5, 1947. Texas Almanac 1955.

²³ *Abilene Reporter-News*, March 28, 1954. *El Paso Herald-Post*, April 21, June 23 & 28, 1954. *The Odessa American*, June 20, 1954. Texas Almanac 1955.

The Baltimore Sun columnist Thomas O'Neill claimed Regan was defeated because he supported Eisenhower for election in 1952. Regan had been on record as opposing the Stevenson-Sparkman ticket that year, and his wife was quoted as saying she was voting for Eisenhower. Frank Wilson of Dallas, who did not run for renomination in 1954, announced in 1952 that he would not campaign for Stevenson. On the other hand, Lucas had said he was "solidly behind Stevenson," although Amon Carter was an active Eisenhower supporter. Lucas and Regan were the only two of Texas' 21 representatives to fail of renomination, though Wilson was one of three who chose to retire.²⁴

Southern Democrats Lanham, Passman, Williams, Dorn, Evins, Teague, Burleson, and Abbitt were unopposed on the ballot in November. Garmatz of Baltimore was not far behind. His only opponent was a Progressive Party candidate. Robert Jones drew a Republican opponent, but Adin Batson got only 8% of the vote.

Preston saw no opposition until it was revealed in early October that he had one-third ownership in an outfit that got a mortgage insured by the Federal Housing Authority for construction of apartments in Savannah. The enterprise sold their stock to a construction company for \$150,000, realizing a net profit for Preston of \$47,600. Preston denied any use of "my office to influence any official." The affair drew Preston a write-in opponent who took 16%.²⁵

Jasper Butler, 77, a Republican dry goods salesman held Albert in Oklahoma to 83%.²⁶

Hardy and Harrison each took 74% in Virginia against their respective Republican opponents, a 42-year-old attorney and a 52-year-old cattle farmer.²⁷

James Davis had a tougher race but was not really threatened, getting 64%. Charles Moye, an attorney, was reportedly the first Republican candidate on the ballot for Congress in Georgia since Reconstruction.²⁸

The Southern Democrat in the Class who was most stretched was Deane, whose District bordered that of Hamilton Jones, defeated by a Republican in 1952. Attorney Harold Gavin, 40, was from a prominent Republican family. His father had been a legislator, a Federal district attorney, and in 1950 the Republican candidate for the US Senate. His brother would be a Federal district attorney and twice the Republican candidate for governor. Deane was not worried enough to keep him from attending the Moral ReArmament World Assembly in Michigan in October. The Representative enlisted in this religious movement in 1951, he and his family becoming highly active for years in the anti-communist sect. Deane won with 59% of the vote.²⁹

²⁴ *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore), August 4, 1954. *The Odessa American*, October 20, 1952. *El Paso Times*, October 5, 1952. *The Whitewright Sun*, October 30, 1952.

²⁵ *The Cumberland News*, October 8, 1954. "Finding Aid," Preston Papers.

²⁶ *Miami Daily News-Record*, May 24, 1954.

²⁷ 1940 Census schedule, Norfolk City, Virginia. *The Bee*, July 12, 1954.

²⁸ *The Anniston Star*, October 19, 1954.

²⁹ Harold Winfield Gavin stone, Buffalo Cemetery, Sanford, North Carolina. "National Register Listing for Hawkins [Avenue District] – July 5, 2000," at SanfordNC.net/historic_preservation. *The Robesonian*, August 23, 1955. *North Carolina Manual* 1951. *North Carolina Manual* 1961. *North Carolina Manual* 1965. *Statesville Record & Landmark*, November 2, 1957. *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, October 1, 1954. Badger (2007), 82. Deane, 124. *The Robesonian*, October 22, 1952. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 21, 1936. *Pottstown Mercury*, August 9, 1961. Deane was hardly the only congressman involved in Moral ReArmament. In 1956, 23 senators and representatives got the

Southerners were not the only members from non-competitive districts. Multer of Brooklyn got 79% with both Democratic and Liberal nominations against two opponents, Republican with 19%, and Laborite. Bachelor Blatnik of Minnesota, still living in his parents' home when in-State at the age of 43, was secure with 72% against the same Republican that he defeated two years earlier. Keating had a fresh Democratic and Liberal Party challenger but also took 72%.³⁰

Only a little less secure were Republicans McCulloch of Ohio (68%), St. George of New York (65%), Mack of Washington (65%), Riehlman of New York (64%), Paul Dague of Pennsylvania (63%), and Jackson of California (61%).

McCulloch's opponent, Forrest Blankenship, "got tangled up in marital affairs after he became a candidate and went through a divorce trial and other complications that hurt his political prospects."³¹ While these "affairs" did not help the Democrat, how much they hurt is questionable. McCulloch's proportion of the vote barely changed across the 1952, 1954, and 1956 elections.

Clyde Tisdale, who squeaked past two other Democrats in the blanket primary to win the right to challenge Mack, was disavowed by the State Democratic Central Committee due to past membership in the Communist Party, which Tisdale admitted but renounced. The Democrat had served sixteen years in the Legislature.³² While divorce might have made little difference to the voters, communism seemed to. Mack ran well ahead of Tisdale compared to his 1952 and future 1956 showings.

Jackson faced Rev. Mark Hogue, a Congregational minister, who said that his platform was "freedom of religion," and lit into Jackson's attack on Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam.³³ Communism outscored religion. Jackson's electoral performance was nearly the same as in the surrounding two elections.

Democrat Karsten of St. Louis fell into the "only a little less secure" camp as well. Republican Bill Bangert, 30, a road contractor and Mayor of Berkeley, Missouri, filed. An athlete at 6'5" and 270 pounds, he was born Wilfred Martin Bangert, but changed his name legally to "Bill" in 1953. Apart from these facts, his more notable distinction was eye problems. An allergic reaction caused hemorrhaging of the retina, which an operation helped with one eye. Then he reported in September before the election being injured by flying glass in the bad eye when someone shot through his car window while he was taking a babysitter home. There was little apparent sympathy vote; Karsten got 66%.³⁴

Over the conventional "safe" threshold of 55% were Republicans Dawson (57%), Nicholson (57%), Harvey (56%), Miller (55.5%), and Tollefson (55.2%), and Democrat Donohue (57%).

Dawson had another bout with Reva Beck Bosone, who ousted him in 1948 and lost to him in 1952. The biggest issue was the proposed upper Colorado River project of storage dams, with debate over whether a Republican or Democratic Congress was most likely to fund it, and whether a Republican or Democratic representative in a Republican Congress was most likely to support it.³⁵

Nicholson defeated the same Democrat as in 1952, dropping only two points.

Secretary of Defense to assign three Air Force planes to convey adherents on a round-the-world tour. *The Oregon Statesman*, August 13, 1961.

³⁰ *The Minneapolis Star*, October 23, 1954.

³¹ *The Akron Beacon Journal*, October 27, 1954.

³² *The Daily Chronicle*, November 6, 1952; September 16, 1954. *Abilene Reporter-News*, September 29, 1954.

³³ *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, February 4, 1954.

³⁴ *Joplin Globe*, February 10, 1954. *The Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune*, June 20, 1953. *The Oregon Statesman*, March 23, 1954. *The Kansas City Times*, September 30, 1954.

³⁵ *The Daily Herald*, October 13 & 14 & 15 & 25, 1954.

Harvey faced the Democratic National Committeewoman from Indiana, Inez Scholl, 64, a former probation officer.³⁶

In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Democrat Edward Turner ran against Miller as a segregationist. Miller's response in a letter to editors in his District was that the Eastern Shore's "acceptance" of school segregation was "desirable and successful," but that the Supreme Court had ruled and the law was the law. *The Baltimore Sun* reported that Miller was "fighting for his political life" on the integration issue but was saved by Hurricane Hazel and the prompt response of the Representative and the Eisenhower Administration to its widespread devastation in the District.³⁷

Tollefson's race was one of seeming disavowal of Eisenhower. Not only did Tollefson avoid Eisenhower's visit for dedication of a dam, but his Democratic opponent had recently switched from the Republican Party in protest of the Administration's opposition to public power.³⁸

Donohue defeated recent Worcester mayor Andrew Holmstrom.³⁹

Eight Republicans won re-election with less than 55% of the vote.

A couple of weeks before the election, Congressional Quarterly evaluated the chances of Glenn Davis as "doubtful." Democrat Gaylord Nelson, attorney and State Senator, attacked Davis on McCarthyism, dairy price supports, and mostly on the Representative's vote for reversion of tidelands to the states. At the same time accusing Davis of selling that vote for Texas oil money, Nelson denied accusing Davis of selling his vote, not helping the substance of the complaint. Davis' biographer would write that Davis was "on the defense almost from the campaign's beginning." Davis survived with 54%, a drop of nine points from 1952.⁴⁰

Farm policy was a major issue in Kansas, where Smith was challenged by Elmo Mahoney, a dairyman and farm implement dealer. Smith also lost nine points, dropping to 53%.⁴¹

In California, Allen also took 53%, a big decline from 1952, but in that previous year he captured both the Republican and Democratic nominations through cross-filing. Farming was not the issue in Oakland and Berkeley. Democrat Stanley Crook was an author and educator in the areas of economics and federalism.⁴²

Legless Second World War veteran David Brady, an employee of the Chamber of Commerce, ran against Patterson in Connecticut. Patterson presented himself as a cold warrior under attack by opponents of Joe McCarthy and won with 53%.⁴³

A flight instructor and novice politician at Erie Airport held Kearns to 52%, a five-point drop from 1952.⁴⁴

³⁶ 1940 Census schedule, Fayette County, Indiana.

³⁷ *The Morning Herald* (Hagerstown), October 4, 1954. *The Baltimore Sun*, October 21, November 1, 1954. *The Salisbury Times*, October 19, 1954; October 30, 1956.

³⁸ *Time*, November 1, 1954. *The Daily Chronicle*, September 14, 1954. According to *Time*, a Tollefson aide said the Representative was avoiding the dedication because, "Thor doesn't want Ike to run on his coattails."

³⁹ *Newport Daily News*, December 23, 1953.

⁴⁰ *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, May 19, July 22, September 1, October 21, 1954. Kevin Smith, 159.

⁴¹ *The Salina Journal*, September 22, October 3, 1954. *The Belleville Telescope*, October 28, 1954.

⁴² *Daily Independent Journal*, June 6, 1951. *Port Angeles Evening News*, April 2, 1958.

⁴³ *The Hartford Courant*, August 1, September 19, 1954. *Naugatuck Daily News*, October 16, 1954. *The Bridgeport Telegram*, October 15, 1954.

⁴⁴ *The Record-Argus*, May 20, 1954.

Nutmeggers Sadlak and Seely-Brown campaigned against Southern Democrats who were “raiding” Connecticut’s textile industry. Their respective Democratic opponents, Joseph Lyford and Henry Pierce, campaigned as supporters of Eisenhower. Each incumbent took 51% with drops of four and five points.⁴⁵

Closest to elimination was Coudert of Manhattan, surviving with 50.2% of the vote. Democrat and Liberal nominee Anthony Akers was something of a war hero from being one of the PT boat commanders that ran the Japanese siege to take Gen. Douglas MacArthur from Corregidor. What that had to do with dipping Coudert seven points from his 1952 vote share is unknown.⁴⁶

Neither Illinoisians Jenison nor Vail were successful in recapturing their seats in 1954. Democrat Barratt O’Hara again bested Vail, this time by 23 points, amid the Republican’s racist campaign. Jenison was widely thought to have a good chance to unseat Democrat Peter Mack, whom he lost to in 1952, due to a Republican supplanting the Democrat in the State capital, which was in the District. Hordes, well actually 2500, of patronage employees in Springfield were to make the difference. Jenison ran two points behind his previous showing.⁴⁷

The only incumbent member of the Class of ’46 who failed of reelection was Kersten of Milwaukee. Kersten ousted Democrat Andrew Biemiller in 1946, lost to Biemiller in 1948, defeated Biemiller again in 1950, and held on against Biemiller in 1952, but lost to Henry Reuss in 1954. Reuss, wealthy from family banking money but recurrently unsuccessful as a politician until he had won a seat on the City school board, made McCarthy the issue. Wisconsin political columnist John Wyngaard opined that Kersten was the only Republican congressman in the State who would want McCarthy to campaign for him in 1954. Kersten did not need McCarthy, showing himself fully capable of mirroring the disgraced Senator in his own attacks on Reuss, though hampered by a lack of evidence other than Reuss’s association with the anti-communist Americans for Democratic Action. Reuss won by 4.5 points.⁴⁸

The average fall in vote percentage for Republican candidates in the Class from 1952 to 1954 was only three points.⁴⁹ The range was minus ten points for Vail from one loss to the next to an increase of five points for Dawson in Utah. As noted earlier in this chapter, the 1954 midterm showed only a small shift in the partisan needle.

On the cusp of a revolution in equal rights for African-Americans, let us assess the relative small-d democracies of members of the Class. The proportion of the total population voting for a member of the Class in 1954 ranged from 4.4% in the Fourth District of Virginia (Abbitt) to 47.3% in the Fifth District of Connecticut (Patterson). The average figure for the 14 Southern Democrats was 9.3%. For the six other Democrats it was 31.1%. For the 24 Republicans (including Vail and Jenison) it was 37.8%.

⁴⁵ *The Bridgeport Telegram*, October 2 & 8, November 1, 1954. *The Hartford Courant*, October 2, 1954.

⁴⁶ *The Post-Standard*, September 21, 1956.

⁴⁷ *The Evening Republican* (Columbus), October 23, 1954. *Freeport Journal-Standard*, October 4 & 25, 1954. *The Daily Register* (Harrisburg), November 3, 1954. *Southtown Economist*, November 3, 1954. *The Decatur Daily Review*, June 6, 1954. *The Daily Pantagraph*, July 28, 1954. *Alton Evening Telegraph*, October 22, 1954.

⁴⁸ *The Daily Telegram*, September 22, 1953. *The La Crosse Tribune*, April 12, September 24, 1954. *Monroe Evening Times*, June 3, 1954. *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, September 20, October 14 & 20, 1954. *The Lincoln Star*, October 8, 1954. *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 24, 1975.

⁴⁹ This figure excludes the drop of John Allen of California, who was the Democratic as well as the Republican nominee in 1952. Also excluded is Russell Mack’s increase of 12 points in Washington against a Democrat disavowed by his party.

Off-year turnouts were lower than during presidential years. The denominator used in this calculation is the whole population of the districts, not just the voting age population (and the population figures are from the 1950 Census, four years earlier). Eight of the Southern Democrats were uncontested, which lowers turnout, although in all cases there were other contests on the ballot, though many of them were likely uncontested as well.

Southern states were notorious for restricting the voting of African-Americans and to some extent of poorer whites as well with mechanisms such as the poll tax and literacy tests. The highest turnout in the South was for Deane's reelection in the Eighth District of North Carolina at 21%, the most contested of the Southern elections.⁵⁰

Was there a greater democratic performance in the primary elections in the Southern contests? All of those with uncontested general elections were nominated in uncontested primaries. Four of those with contested elections were nominated without opposition or in convention. That leaves two with contested victories and three who were defeated in the primary. Their average turnout was 17% of the population, higher than the general election in the case of James Davis and lower in the case of Deane. The highest figure was 21% in Wheeler's losing primary. But when the uncontested primaries are factored in the average is 5%.

At the end of the electoral battle, ten of the members of the Class of '46 elected in 1952 would not be returning to the House after the 1954 election. Two retired, Democrat Wilson and convicted Republican Bramblett. Four sought other office: Democrat Stanley of Virginia for governor, Republican Javits of New York for attorney general, Republican Cotton of New Hampshire for senator, and Democrat Battle of Alabama for senator, with only the last unsuccessful. Three Democrats failed of renomination: Wheeler of Georgia, Lucas of Fort Worth, and Reagan of Texas. Republican Kersten of Milwaukee was defeated for reelection.

The 71 Republicans (65%), 37 Democrats, and one American Laborite who were the Class of '46 were reduced in the 84th House to 20 Republicans (50%) and 20 Democrats. Among the Democrats 23 (62% of Democrats) Southerners were now down to 14 (but up to 70%). If a conservative coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats can be assumed, that group dropped from 94 (86%) to 34 (85%).

The following members of the Class of '46 did not return to the House after 1954:

Laurie Battle's major vocalized concern was the Soviet Union. Over four terms he was moderately active. He spoke 81 times and moved five floor amendments, three of which were accepted. One addressed UN funding and two dealt with the upkeep of Federal buildings. None of his 28 resolutions were enacted and only three of his 41 private bills, but three of his 84 public bills were, dealing with postal salaries, Soviet trade, and members' telephones. Battle voted with Democrats 116 times (21 with only Northerners, 46 with Southerners), Republicans 5 times, and missed 12 votes. He was on the moderately liberal side of Southern Democrats in his rated voting.

Ernest Bramblett was largely non-participatory, speaking only nine times in four terms. None of his eight resolutions were enacted, but nine of his 73 private bills were, and three of his 28 public bills, two addressing surplus farm labor camps, and the other a local matter. Bramblett voted 120 times with Republicans, seven times with Democrats (once with Northerners and five times with Southerners) and

⁵⁰ Keyssar, 258-9. North Carolina had repealed the poll tax but retained the literacy test.

missed four votes. He contrarily opposed extension of reciprocal trade agreements and a minimum wage increase. His rated voting was on the conservative side of the Republican Class center.

Norris Cotton was somewhat active on the floor after his slow start, speaking 84 times and moving six floor amendments, three of which were accepted. They dealt with truck safety, the Defense Production Act, and agricultural funding. However, he introduced only ten public and one private bill and no resolutions, none enacted. Cotton voted with Republicans 102 times, Democrats 21 times (six with Northerners alone, four with Southerners), and missed ten votes. Cotton's rated voting was identical to Bramblett's.

Jacob Javits was far and away the most liberal Republican in the Class. His rated voting placed him in the middle of the Northern Democrats. He even voted more with Democrats than Republicans on key votes, 90 times (55 with Northerners only) versus 37 times. His key votes were easily the most Democratic of the Class's Republicans. He missed four votes and was contrarily opposed to the draft and the Wood anti-subversive bill. Javits was highly active, speaking 1112 times on the floor (first among the Class per session by 25%) and introducing 84 floor amendments (the most per session of the Class by 125%) and being successful with 14. They addressed heart disease, public health, rent control, the Defense Production Act (thrice), Korean aid, Yugoslav aid, India aid, foreign aid in general (twice), veterans, farm commodities, and a local matter. He spread himself thin, emphasizing rent control, housing, displaced persons, foreign aid, Jews in Palestine, civil liberties, the State Department information service, executive oversight, the Marshall Plan Act, the Defense Production Act, immigration laws, and agricultural support. Three of his 80 resolutions (most per session of Class Republicans) were enacted dealing with Greek children, Ghana and Nigeria, and a private matter. Fourteen of his 126 private bills were enacted; he introduced more per session than any other Class Republican. But Javits was spectacularly unsuccessful with 112 public bills, none being enacted.

Charles Kersten was also active in his three terms, but hardly holding a candle to Javits. He spoke 265 times and moved sixteen amendments, five successfully dealing with Labor, free movement of persons, religious exemptions, organizing military units of escapees from communist states, and one that just changed the title of a bill. Five of his 54 resolutions were enacted addressing his committee on the Baltic States four times and House printing. His primary concern was clearly the Soviet Union, but he also weighed in on Labor, foreign aid, internal subversion, and displaced Germans. None of his 46 private bills were enacted and only one of his 43 public bills, which addressed a local matter. Kersten voted with Republicans 65 times, Democrats 20 times (11 with Northerners), and missed 11 votes. His only contrary vote was opposition to repeal of the oleo tax; he was from Wisconsin. Do not let his obsession with the Soviet Union mislead, he was very much on the liberal side of the Republican center in his rated voting.

Wingate Lucas was relatively active, speaking 119 times and introducing nine floor amendments. Six were accepted addressing the minimum wage, subversion, wage stabilization, housing, and local matters (twice). Minimum wage was a particular concern though nothing compared to his passion for the new Dallas-Fort Worth airport. His one enacted public bill of 16 dealt with mollusks. Neither of his two resolutions was successful, but five of his 18 private bills were. Lucas voted with Democrats 97 times (63 with only Southerners, four with Northerners), Republicans 22 times, and missed 14 votes. His rated voting was on the right side of Southern Democrats.

Ken Regan's concerns were largely local. Of his six successful public bills of 27 introduced, only one concerning reclamation was broader than his District. Two of his three successful resolutions (of four) were memorials to House members and the third addressed the Marine Corps Memorial. Four of his 15 private bills were enacted. He spoke 57 times and moved four amendments; one dealing with the digest

of bills was enacted. Regan voted with Democrats 72 times (54 with Southerners only and once with Northerners), Republicans 19 times, and missed a substantial 25 votes. His rated voting was tied for third most conservative among Southern Democrats.

Thomas Stanley in a smidgen more than three terms spoke 42 times and moved two amendments, both successful and addressing the Defense Production Act and House administration. Having become chair of House Administration, that was his major focus, leading to four successful resolutions out of seven introduced. His one enacted public bill out of six similarly dealt with members' accounts. Neither of his two private bills was enacted. Stanley voted 72 times with Democrats (47 with Southerners alone, four with Northerners), 21 times with Republicans, and missed 13 votes. He contrarily opposed aid to Greece and Turkey and opposed the override of the veto of HR 3193 increasing the pension for veterans requiring constant care as a result of non-service-connected disability. His rated voting was on the conservative side of Southern Democrats.

Don Wheeler's two terms on House Administration explains four of his five successful resolutions out of a total of ten. The fifth was a local issue. He also served two terms on Veterans' Affairs and had a successful public bill to show for that. Two other enacted public bills out of his total of 35 introduced were on local matters. One of his four accepted floor amendments out of a total of five moved also dealt with veterans. The others involved the District of Columbia, irrigation funding, and rent control. Neither of his two private bills was enacted. He participated on the floor 134 times. Of Wheeler's key votes, 95 were with Democrats (60 with Southerners only and two with Northerners), 20 with Republicans, and he missed 17 votes. His one contrary vote was opposition to the Mutual Security Program. He was centrally conservative with Southern Democrats in his rated voting.

Frank Wilson battled Wingate Lucas on the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and also weighed in on immigration law and submerged lands. None of his 23 public bills were enacted, but twelve of the 29 private ones were. He also was successful with a resolution out of four and a private amendment out of two. He spoke 56 times. Wilson voted 100 times with Democrats (68 with only Southerners and three with Northerners), 27 times with Republicans, and missed five votes. His one contrary vote was in opposition to a minimum wage increase. Wilson was on the conservative side of Southern Democrats.