

The New Metro Politics:

The 2008 Presidential Election and Beyond

Robert Lang, Ph.D.

**Professor and Director, Urban Affairs and Planning
Virginia Tech—Alexandria**

Election Demographics:

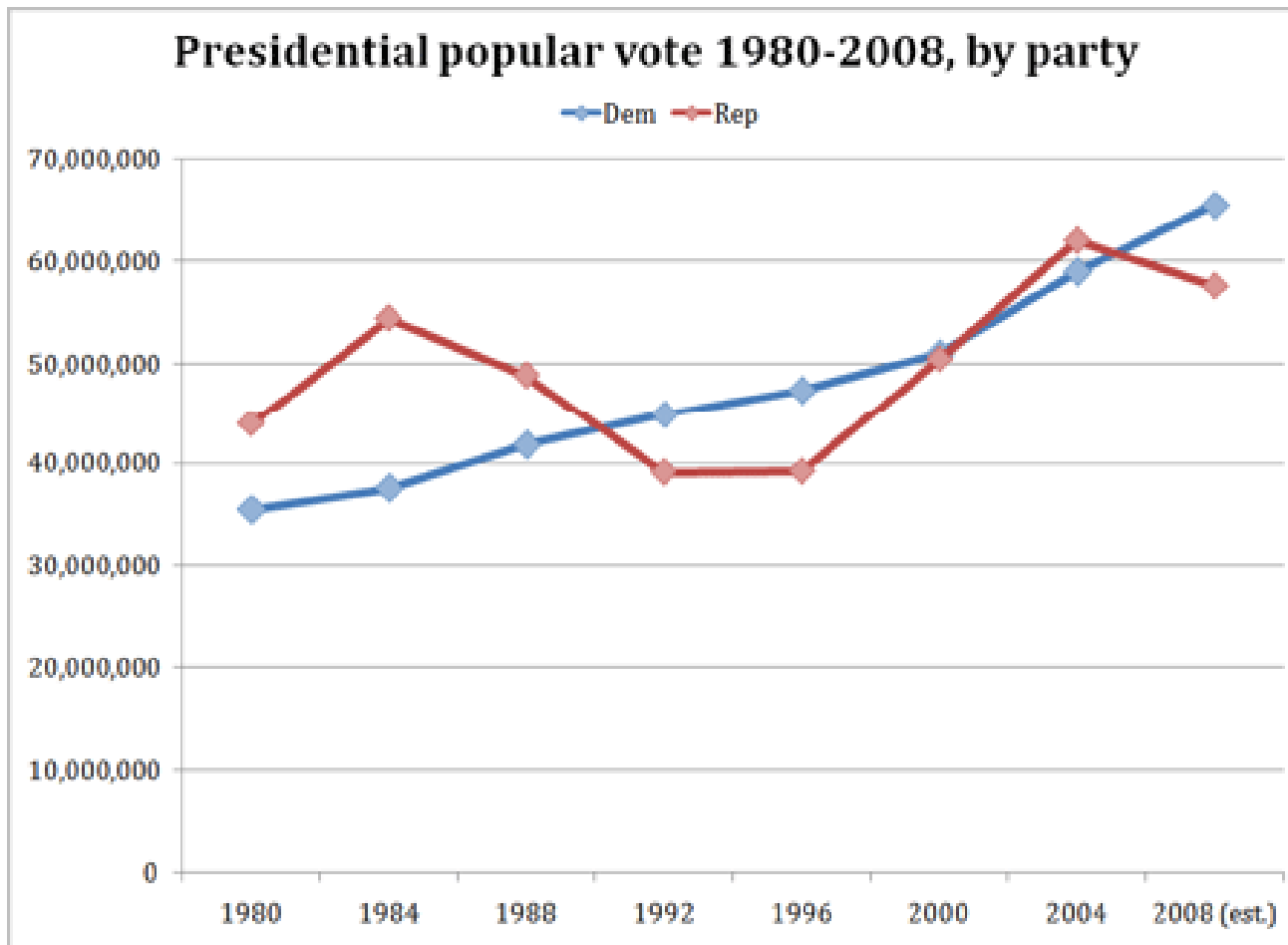
What We Learned in 2008, What It Means for 2010 and 2012

**American Enterprise Institute/Brookings Institution
Washington, DC – June 12, 2009**

[The Big Picture]

- **The New 3D Politics**
 - **Density + Diversity = Democrats**
- **Election 2008**
 - **The Suburbs Rule!**
- **Looking Ahead to 2010 and Beyond**
 - **Demographics = Destiny?**
 - **Not Always, But Often**

[Dems Win 4 in 5 of P.V.s Since '88]



Since 1988, Dems Win E.V. Vote

Electoral College Vote 1988 to 2008

Year	Dem/Rep	Dem EVs	Rep EVs	Winner	Diff
2008	Obama/McCain	365	174	Dem	191
2004	Kerry/Bush	252	286	Rep	34
2000	Gore/Bush	267	271	Rep	4
1996	Clinton/Dole	379	159	Dem	220
1992	Clinton/Bush	370	168	Dem	202
1988	Dukakis/Bush	112	426	Rep	314
	Dem Total	1,745			
	Rep Total		1,484		

Note: Missouri's 2008 11 Electoral Votes have been allocated to McCain

Obama Won Most Affluent States

Top Ten Median Household Income States

Rank	State	Median Income	EVs	2008 Winner
1	Maryland	\$ 68,080	10	Obama
2	New Jersey	\$ 67,035	15	Obama
3	Connecticut	\$ 65,967	7	Obama
4	Alaska	\$ 64,333	3	McCain
5	Hawaii	\$ 63,746	4	Obama
6	New Hampshire	\$ 63,369	4	Obama
7	Massachusetts	\$ 63,365	12	Obama
8	California	\$ 59,948	55	Obama
9	Virginia	\$ 59,562	13	Obama
10	Minnesota	\$ 55,802	10	Obama
	Obama Total		130	
	McCain Total		3	

Source: American Community Survey, 2008. Data is for 2007

Obama Won the Biggest States

Dozen Top Electoral College States

Rank	State	EVs	2008 Winner
1	California	55	Obama
2	Texas	34	McCain
3	New York	31	Obama
4	Florida	27	Obama
5	Illinois	21	Obama
6	Pennsylvania	21	Obama
7	Ohio	20	Obama
8	Michigan	17	Obama
9	Georgia	15	McCain
10	New Jersey	15	Obama
11	North Carolina	15	Obama
12	Virginia	13	Obama
	Obama Total	235	
	McCain Total	50	

[Least and Most Educated Unite!]

Obama vs Kerry Exit Poll Data, Education

Group	Percent Obama	Percent Kerry	Percent Diff
No High School	63	50	+13
H.S. Graduate	52	47	+5
Some College	51	46	+5
College Graduate	50	46	+4
PostGraduate	58	55	+3

Source: Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International

A Minority-Driven Obama Win

Obama vs Kerry Exit Poll Data, Race

Group	Percent Obama	Percent Kerry	Percent Diff
White	43	41	+2
African-American	95	88	+7
Latino	67	53	+14
Asian	62	56	+6
Other	66	54	+12
White Men	41	37	+4
White Women	46	44	+2

Source: Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International

[The New Suburban Geography]

- **Brookings-MI County Typology**
 - **Is Based on Commuting Patterns, Land Uses, and Growth Rates**
 - **Uses Five Categories and Classifies 417 Counties**
 - **Covers the 50 Most Populous U.S. Metropolitan Areas**

[Some Examples Around the U.S.]

- **Core—Cook, IL**
- **Inner Suburb—De Kalb, GA**
- **Mature Suburb—Fairfax, VA**
- **Emerging Suburb—Douglas, CO**
- **Exurb—Pinal, AZ**

U.S. Counties By Location

Location Type	# of Counties	% of US Pop.
Top 50 Metro Counties	417	53.4%
Cores	25	9.7%
Inner Suburbs	36	18.8%
Mature Suburbs	84	16.1%
Emerging Suburbs	103	6.7%
Exurbs	169	2.6%
Other Metro Areas	674	29.4%
Micropolitan Areas	674	10.3%
Non-Core Area Counties	1,301	7.0%
Total	3,066	100.0%

County Characteristics

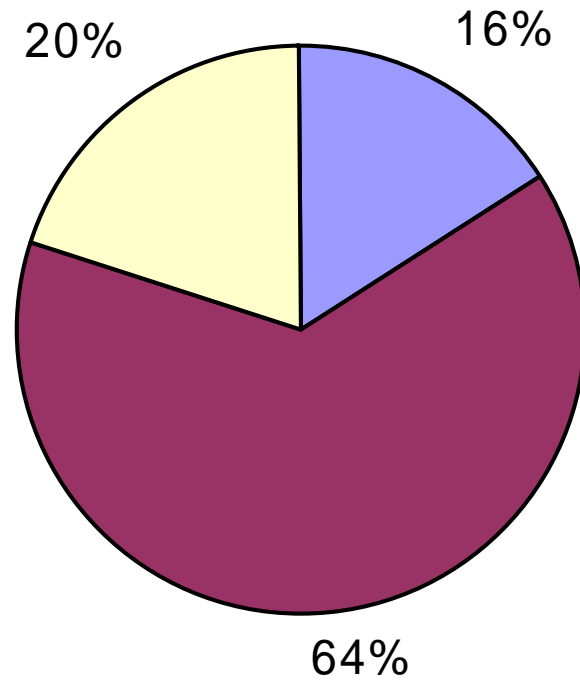
County Type	Percent Urbanized (2000)	Population Density (2006)	Percent White (2006)	Population Growth 2000-2006
Cores	100.0	7,722.3	45.9	-1.3
Inner Suburbs	97.3	1,382.5	58.8	4.6
Mature Suburbs	95.5	1,333.1	71.1	3.6
Emerging Suburbs	66.6	354.2	84.6	17.4
Exurbs	0.0	80.6	88.5	9.7
Top 50 Metros	63.8	460.2	79.5	8.6

Note: All figures are for median values of counties within the category.

Three Parts to the Metropolis

- **Cores (Which are Have Long Been Solidly Democratic Areas)**
- ***Urbanizing Suburbs*—Inner and Mature Suburbs (Which are now Trending to the Democrats)**
- ***Metropolitan Fringe*—Emerging Suburbs and Exurbs (Which still Vote for Republicans, but are Increasingly Contested)**

[The Urbanizing Suburbs are Key]



- Cores
- Urbanizing Suburbs
- Metropolitan Fringe

Comparing 2004 and 2008

2004, 2008 Vote by Geographic Area

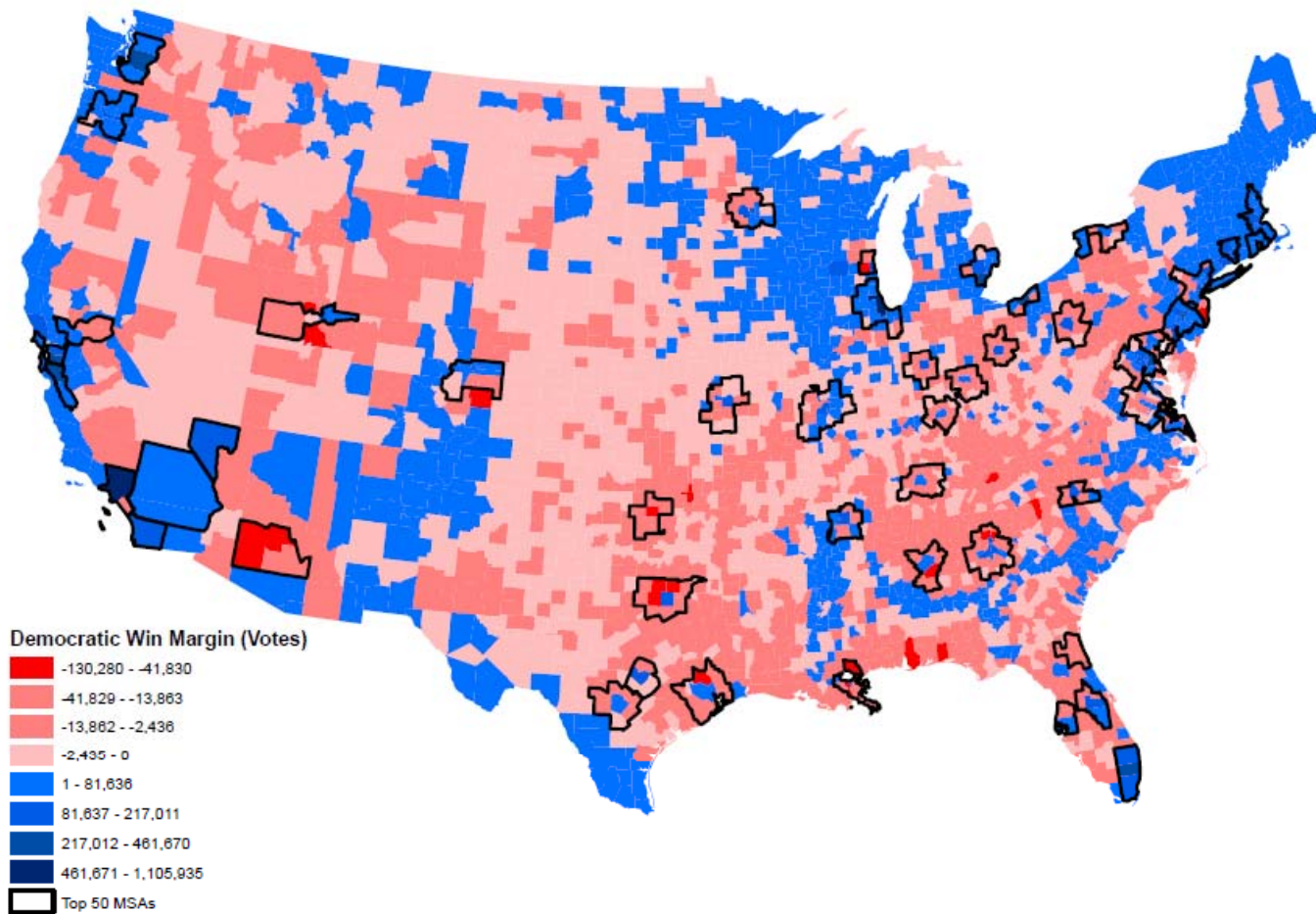
Location Type	Democratic Vote Share 2004	Democratic Vote Share 2008	Percentage Point Difference	Percent Change
Top 50 Metro Counties				
<i>Cores</i>	71.5%	75.5%	4.0	5.7%
<i>Inner Suburbs</i>	53.7%	60.3%	6.6	12.3%
<i>Mature Suburbs</i>	52.2%	57.2%	5.0	9.6%
<i>Emerging Suburbs</i>	40.3%	45.2%	4.9	12.2%
<i>Exurbs</i>	38.1%	41.8%	3.7	9.6%
Other Metro Areas	44.8%	50.1%	5.2	11.7%
Micropolitan Areas	40.1%	44.3%	4.3	10.7%
Total Metro	48.9%	53.9%	5.0	10.2%
Non-Core Areas	39.4%	42.3%	2.9	7.5%

* Based on total returns as of 3:00 Nov. 6, 2008

2008 Suburban Politics

- **The 2006 Democratic Gains Made in Urbanizing Suburbs Expanded in 2008 and Helped Obama win the Presidential Election**
- **Democrats now Dominate the Urbanizing Suburbs and are at least Competitive at the Metropolitan Fringe**

Red vs. Blue with Metros Shown



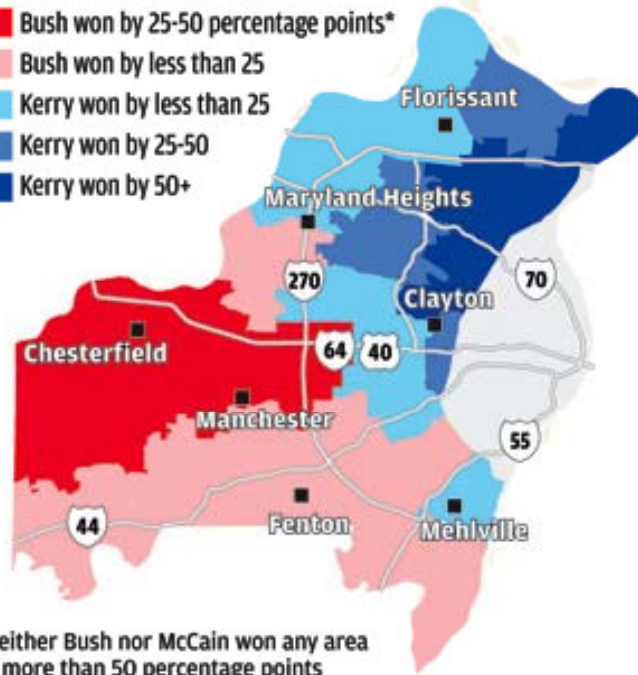
Example of Spreading Dem Vote

HOW ST. LOUIS COUNTY VOTED

In winning St. Louis County, Barack Obama was able to bolster Democratic strongholds in the county, besting John Kerry's performance in 2004, while cutting into areas that George W. Bush carried four years ago. Another factor: John McCain received a lower percentage of votes in every area than Bush did in 2004.

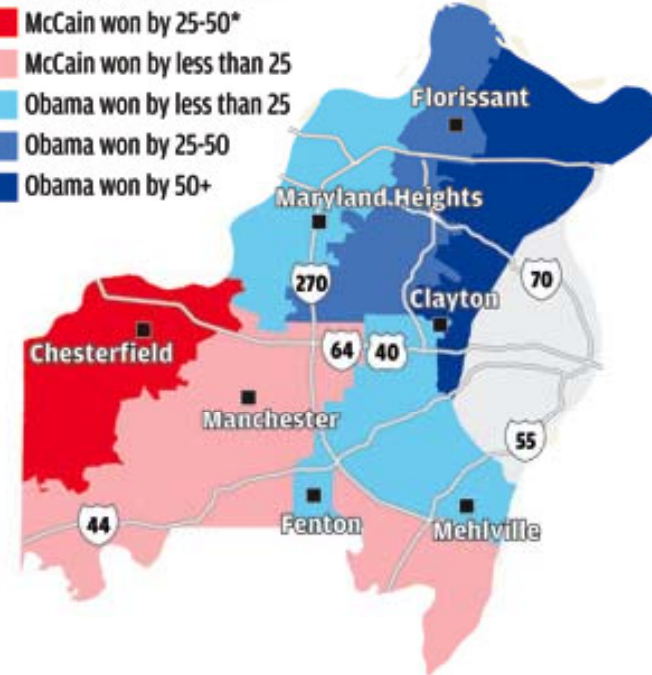
2004 election results

- Bush won by 25-50 percentage points*
- Bush won by less than 25
- Kerry won by less than 25
- Kerry won by 25-50
- Kerry won by 50+



2008 election results

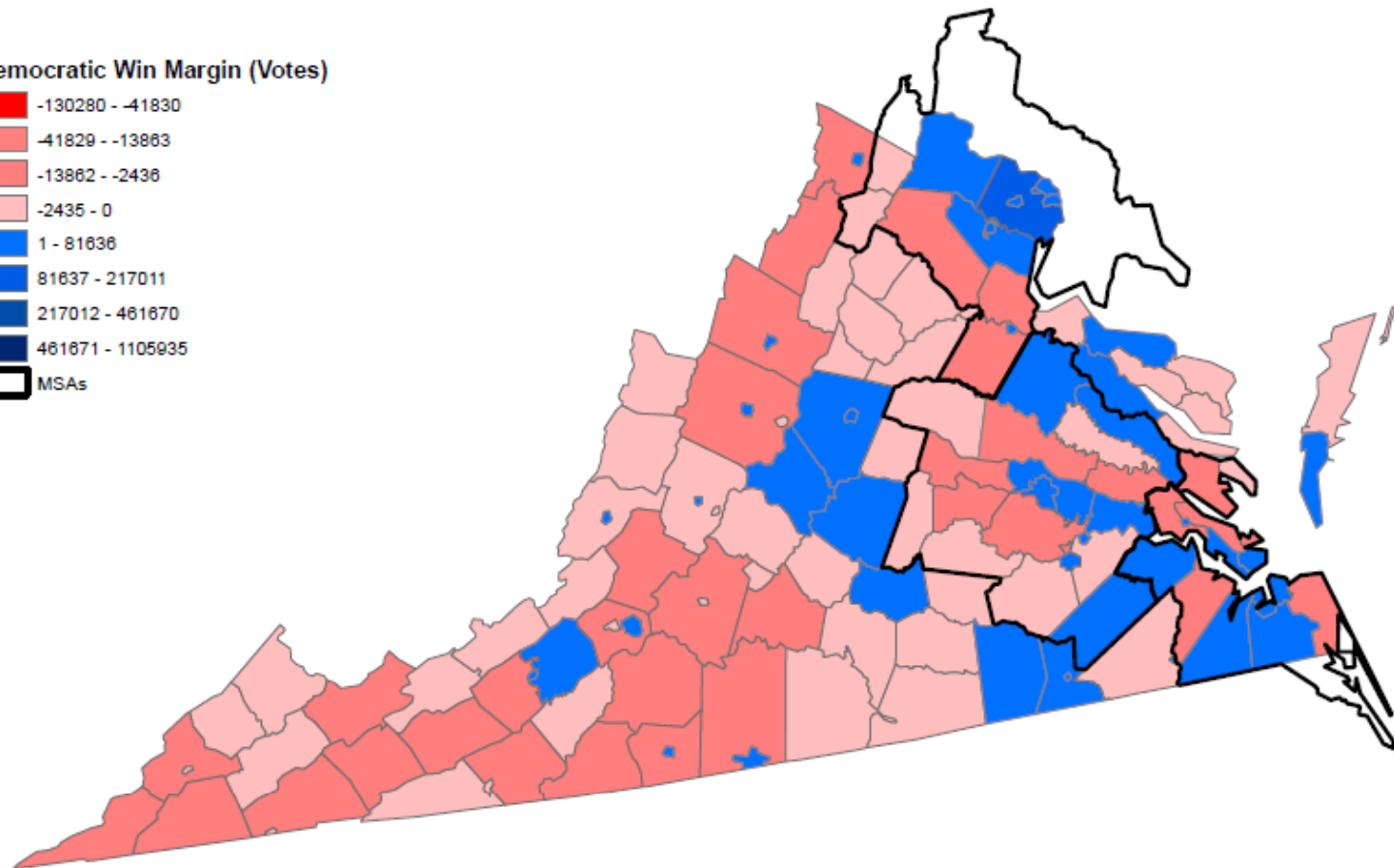
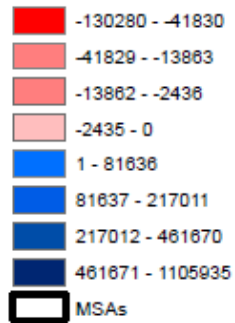
- McCain won by 25-50*
- McCain won by less than 25
- Obama won by less than 25
- Obama won by 25-50
- Obama won by 50+



*Neither Bush nor McCain won any area by more than 50 percentage points

2008 Presidential Vote in VA

Democratic Win Margin (Votes)



[The 2008 Vote in Northern Virginia]

Northern Virginia Vote, 2004 - 2008

Area	2004		2008		2004 - 2008	
	Kerry Vote %	Kerry Vote	Obama Vote %	Obama Vote	% Change	Absolute Change
Inner Suburbs	67.3	105,075	71.8	129,368	23.1	24,293
Mature Suburbs	53.4	255,260	60.1	321,255	25.9	65,995
Emerging Suburbs	45.0	115,612	55.5	165,923	43.5	50,311
Exurbs	36.8	27,909	45.0	40,318	44.5	12,409
Northern Virginia Total		503,856		656,864	30.4	153,008

Conclusions

- **Density = Democrats**
- **Nearly All Population Gains to Mid Century are in Metropolitan Areas**
- **A Greater Share of Metropolitan Growth Will Occur in Built Up Areas**
- **Republican Rural and Exurban Vote Cannot Offset The Democrats Gains in Urbanizing Suburbs Much Longer**

[Looking Ahead, 2010 and 2012]

- **Republican Comeback?**
- **Possible, Based on Politics**
- **But Structural Problems Remain**
- **Republicans Need to get Right with Minorities—Before they Become the Majority**
- **By 2020, Even Texas Could be Blue**



Thank You!