



Never miss a single issue



Subscribe online  
& save 33% off  
newsstand price

# The Democratic Party is Toast

By [Grover Norquist](#)

The modern Democratic Party cannot survive the reelection of President George W. Bush and another four years of Republican control of both Congress and the White House.

No brag. Just fact.

The modern Democratic Party is the party of government. Its growth is the health of the state--and vice versa. Over time, all the party's building blocks are dependent on continuous support and reinforcement by the power of the central government. Trial lawyer money is now a major part of the Democratic Party, but it is wholly dependent on legislators and courts maintaining the present tort laws that allow lawyers to interject themselves into any and all contracts and relationships.

They siphon off some \$240 billion a year--\$40 billion of which stays with a few thousand lawyers. Labor unions, once the godfather of the Democratic Party but now displaced by the richer and more photogenic trial lawyers, cannot maintain their \$8 billion in compulsory union dues without the laws that make such payments mandatory. Both wings of the dependency movement--those locked into welfare dependency and the bureaucrats who get paid well to manage others' dependency (and make sure none of them get jobs and become Republicans) are wholly dependent on legislators halting further welfare reform. Big city political machines thrive on federal grants and state-granted powers. And the coercive utopians--the radical environmentalists, animal-rights activists, feminists, and others who would use state power to force on us tiny non-flushable toilets and cars too small to hold families, take away the circus and our pet cats, and otherwise impose more fussy budget impositions on our lives--all depend on government grants to use and misuse federal and state power.

But outside state power, the Democratic coalition withers and dies. Without effective control of the government, the Democratic Party is like a fish out of water, a vampire in the sun, Antaeus held aloft, an appliance unplugged. In the past, the Democratic Party could afford to lose the presidency and remain connected to its source of power--the state--through control of the House of Representatives, and often the Senate as well. Little damage was done to the structure of the Democratic Party during the interregnums

of the Eisenhower, Nixon, and George H.W. Bush administrations, because their moves could be checkmated by a Democratic Congress. With the end of 40 years of Democratic gerrymandering, states in which a majority of the congressional popular vote goes to the GOP now award a majority of congressional seats to the GOP, too. Republican-led redistricting in Texas will add an additional five to seven Republican House seats over the next few cycles. Redistricting in Texas and throughout the country ensures that Republicans will continue to control the House through 2012. Over time, the Senate-- thanks to those wonderful square states out west--will trend toward 60 Republicans as the 30 red states elect Republicans and the 20 blue states elect Democrats. The anomaly of four Democratic senators hailing from Republican North and South Dakota will come to an end, as will the Republican-held Senate seat in Rhode Island.

With Democrats lacking a beachhead in Congress, four more years of Republican governance with President Bush in the White House will badly damage each of the pillars of the Democrat establishment. In the first term, the Bush Labor Department wrote modern, clear, and updated regulations as to who earns overtime pay, and when and how. Trial lawyers had used archaic and unclear rules to sue companies claiming that workers who had been salaried for decades should actually have been considered hourly workers all those years and subject to overtime pay. Dozens of similarly unclear federal rules have been fodder for trial lawyer enrichment. Simply rewriting regulations to make them clear to all will cost the trial lawyers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Other shifts in national policy will also occur. Abroad, four more years under President Bush will move America and the world towards greater free trade, spreading prosperity throughout the world and bringing more countries into the trading systems that require property rights and rule of law, draining the swamps that breed radicalism and terror. At home, a second Bush administration will permanently abolish the death tax, which not only threatens to confiscate up to half of your parents' lifetime earnings, but also leads to the creation of Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford Foundations that inevitably are taken over by liberal bureaucrats. And a steady increase in the number of honest gun owners will continue to reduce street crime and make America safer. We now have 38 states with "shall issue" concealed carry laws, and Bush just signed a law to allow all cops and retired cops to carry their guns across state lines. Over the next four years, Congress will bring such sanity to Washington, D.C., and expand the number of Americans who can carry across state lines. Less crime means fewer prison guards and parole officers, shrinking the government workforce which tends to be 10 percent more Democrat and less Republican. Solving problems without hiring a lot of government workers is a virtuous cycle.

We'll also be able to shrink the number of government workers already on the payroll. Over the next few years, a high number of middle managers in federal and state governments will become eligible for retirement, allowing government at all levels to reduce the middle management bloat that the private sector shed in the 1980s--but through painless attrition rather than bitter mass layoffs. This will save taxpayers billions and make government more competent and accountable.

Meanwhile, four more years of GOP control means four more years where labor laws are not changed to force workers to pay dues to join unions they don't wish to join. Twenty-two states have Right to Work laws to limit compulsory unionism; that number will grow, and the decline of labor unions from 33 percent of the workforce in the 1950s to 20 percent in 1980 to 13 percent today will continue. Every worker who doesn't join the union is another worker who doesn't pay \$500 a year to organized labor's political machine.

Four more years of President Bush will also accelerate one of the most important demographic changes in America over the past 20 years: the number of Americans who own stock. In 1980, only 20 percent of adults owned stocks in mutual funds, 401ks, IRAs and direct contribution pensions. Today, that number is over 60 percent and growing. Bush wants to create Retirement Savings Accounts to allow every American to sock away up to \$5,000 for retirement tax-free; similarly, the president has proposed Lifetime Savings Accounts allowing Americans to save \$7,500 for education, housing, or health costs during their working lives. Every American who owns his own mutual fund is decreasingly susceptible to the siren call of class warfare. (How did Dick Gephardt do this primary season?) According to pollster Scott Rasmussen, if you own \$5000 in stock you are 18 percent less likely to be a Democrat and more likely to be a Republican. Every demographic group, including race, gender, age, and income, becomes more Republican with stock ownership. Four more years of more and bigger individual retirement accounts, health savings accounts, RSAs, and LSAs means four more years of more Republicans and fewer Democrats.

Last, a Bush-Cheney victory in November will create the conditions for a constructive contest among leading Republican governors and senators for the presidential nomination in 2008. Dick Cheney's heart troubles mean that he will retire with Bush in 2009. Usually the sitting vice president is the natural enemy of all ambitious politicians of his party, but now all Republicans want a Bush-Cheney victory in 2004, so they can run for an open presidential ticket in 2008. The Democrats face the opposite dilemma: Every ambitious Democrat hopes Kerry-Edwards fails, so that the presidency will open for her (or him) in 2008 rather than in 2012, 2016, or 2020. A Bush-Cheney win will lead to Republican governors from Colorado, Mississippi, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York to compete to be the most Reaganite governor--a positive result no matter who wins. And a Bush-Cheney win in 2004 will leave Terry McAuliffe and Bill and Hillary in complete and unchallenged control of the Democratic Party at least through 2008. This is good for the Republicans, if not the republic.

Grover Norquist is president of Americans For Tax Reform and serves on the boards of director of the American Conservative Union and the National Rifle Association.