



The 2024 election is not a battle between pairs of candidates or 2 parties. It's a battle between two Americas, one with democracy, and one without, warns democracy activist, law professor, and author David Pepper.

## NO ROOM FOR MODERATES ANYMORE

Pepper, former chair of the Ohio Democratic Party, reminds us that Donald Trump and his cronies have said as much out loud, telling Republicans there is no room for moderates anymore: "If you voted for Nicky Haley, we don't want you".

In fact, there is no room for anyone who wants to work within the system, says Pepper. There is only room for "extremism in policy, and deference in leadership.

"People think the battle is between blue and red, but it's much bigger than that," emphasizes the strategist.

"Their (Republicans') battle is against democracy itself. It's no use arguing they are not playing by the rules. They are not playing the same game. They're studying Viktor Orbán (prime minister of Hungary) because they know democracy can be undermined. They know that if you hit certain institutions a certain way, they can be undermined."

## MOST REPUBLICAN VIEWS ARE UNPOPULAR

Republicans no longer run for office saying what they are for, says Pepper. They know most of their views are unpopular.

Chamber	Seats	Uncontested						Contested	
		Only Democrats		Only Republicans		Total		#	%
		#	%	#	%	#	%		
House	4,978	813	16.3%	1,240	24.9%	2,057 <sup>[1]</sup>	41.3%	2,921	58.7%
Senate	1,300	185	14.2%	318	24.5%	503	38.7%	797	61.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,278</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>3,718</b>	<b>59.2%</b>

You know Christian Nationalist Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, 2<sup>nd</sup> in line to the presidency, the guy who advocates for criminalizing homosexuality. **Do you know he has NEVER been elected in any real contest?**

Shocking, but true! The Republican congressman ran unopposed in 2015 to "win" a seat in the Louisiana State Legislature. In 2017, he "won" an uncontested seat in the US House in his severely gerrymandered district, which he has continued to "win" uncontested in each subsequent election. No need for platforms or pledges, or even accountability. And Louisiana Republicans have already effectively seated 44 of 105 unopposed state seats for 2024!

BallotPedia reports that more than 4 in 10 (2,560 of 6,278) state legislative seats went unchallenged during the 2022 midterms. That's 40.8% of state seats, where many politicians cut their teeth, uncontested!

See [Unopposed and Uncontested in Muskegon County](#) for the local rundown, and how to qualify or write in for open and unchallenged seats.

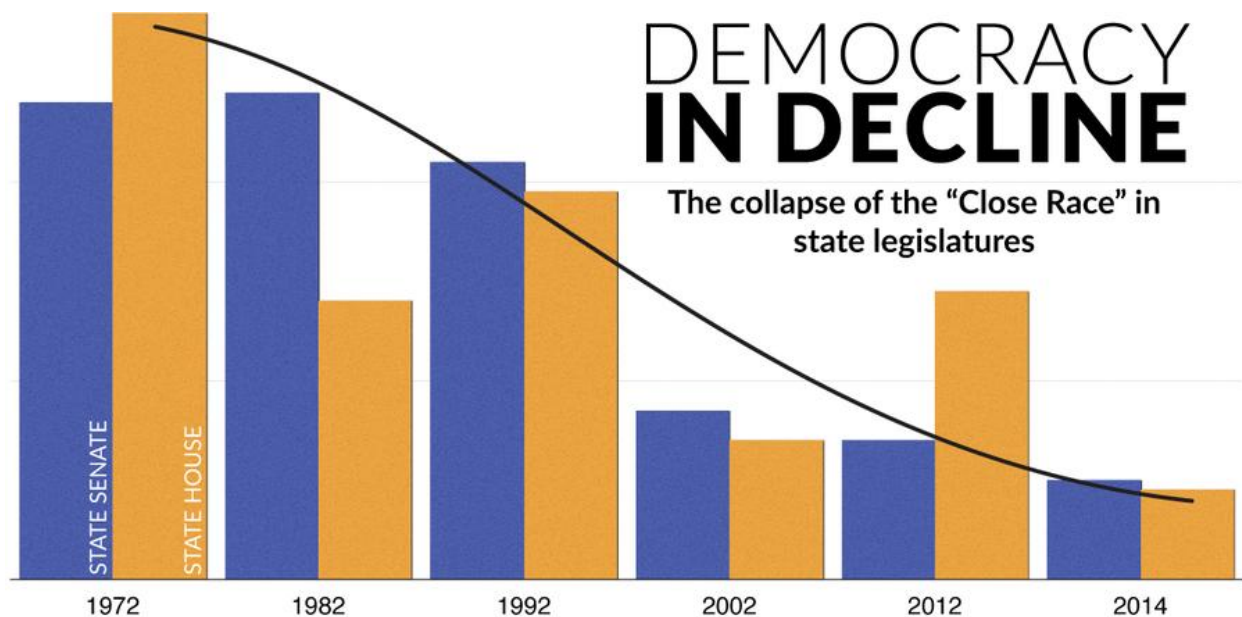


So how do you lock in a minority view over time in America?

“You control states. You gerrymander them, you suppress as much of the majority vote as you can, and then you ram your extremist agenda through, and by then, no one can stop you.”

Voting rights bills were uncommon before Trump lost the 2020 election. Since that time, in just 3+ years, Republican state legislatures around the country have passed more than 1,000 bills restricting voting rights. Republican leaders understand that their views are unpopular. They understand that when more people vote, the margins favor Democrats.

Pepper warns that Democratic wins on the federal level should not be taken as wins for democracy. The fact is, most of the GOP agenda and damage to American democracy are being carried out, often quietly, in state houses. This is easier than you may think, given the large percentage of state house seats that go uncontested every election.



The professor points out the decline in American democratic attitude didn’t start with Donald Trump, and defeating Trump will not solve the problem. You can see from this old Ballotpedia chart that the State Houses have been whittling away at our democracy for decades.

“We take democracy for granted. We assume it is here to stay. They don’t assume that. They’re playing the long game. Long-term victory for democracy will require going where the battle is, in the states.”

Pepper is one of the world’s leading authorities on democracy. Glean the depth of his insight and concern about American Democracy in the titles of his recent books: *The Fifth Vote*, 2023; *Saving Democracy*, 2023; *A Simple Choice*, 2022; *Laboratories of Autocracy: A Wake-Up Call from Behind the Lines*, 2021; *The Voter File*, 2020; *The Wingman*, 2018; and *The People’s House*, 2016.

You might also check out his online programs, *White Board*, and *Every State Blue*, his fight for democracy.

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