

Why the 2030 apportionment could help Republicans more than Democrats

Quick summary:

- *New projections for the 2030 apportionment suggest that red states will likely gain U.S. House seats and blue states will probably lose ground. In the projections, Texas gains four seats, Florida gains two to four, and Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina each gain one. Conversely, California is on pace to lose four seats, while New York and Illinois might lose one to two.*
- *The projected seat changes will affect the Electoral College, too. They would increase Donald Trump's 2024 electoral vote haul to 322, up 10 votes from his actual result. While political conditions could change quite a bit by 2032, this would lower the bar for what the GOP needs to win. In 2024, Republicans needed to win at least four of the seven key swing states to win the presidency, including the tipping-point state of Pennsylvania. But under these projections, Republicans would only have needed the Sun Belt trio of Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina.*

Last week, the Census Bureau [released new estimates](#) for the population of the United States and its individual states. While overall growth slowed, state-level trends remained largely similar: The fastest-growing states are in the [Sun Belt](#) and [Interior West](#), while slower-growing (or shrinking) states are mainly found along the [West Coast](#) and across [the Frost Belt](#).

Naturally, these trends [will have political ramifications](#). Different organizations and experts quickly took the updated population estimates and made projections about [the apportionment](#) of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives after the 2030 census. Using somewhat different approaches, redistricting expert [Jonathan Cervas of](#)

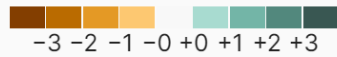
[Carnegie Mellon University](#), [the Brennan Center for Justice](#), and [the American Redistricting Project](#) all released projections detailing the potential gains and losses each state might experience in the next round of reapportionment. And on the whole, states that President Donald Trump carried in 2024 are in line to gain ground, while states that then-Vice President Kamala Harris won look set to lose it.

The projections differed in small ways, but broadly agreed about the likely state gainers and losers. Taking the median change of these projections, Texas (four seats) and Florida (three seats) appear on their way to the biggest gains, while Georgia and North Carolina could each add one seat. Three states in the Interior West — Arizona, Idaho, and Utah — are also on course to gain one apiece. Conversely, the biggest loser is likely to be California, which is trending toward a four-seat decline, and New York, which could lose two. Six other states — Illinois, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin — are projected to each subtract one seat.

Sun Belt gains, losses for Frost Belt & West Coast

Projected* change for each state's total number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives in reapportionment after the 2030 census

Change in seats



*Projection comes from the median electoral vote total for each state based on three projections released by Jonathan Cervas (Carnegie Mellon), the Brennan Center for Justice, and the American Redistricting Project.



Should these projections come to pass, the 2030 gains for Texas and Florida would rank among the largest in the past few decades. Dating back to 1970, Texas's four-seat gain would equal the third-largest raw increase in seats in a single reapportionment, trailing only California in 1990 (seven) and 1970 (five).

Texas could be one of the biggest gainers ever

States that have gained at least two U.S. House seats in reapportionment (including projected* change in 2030), since 1970

State	Year	Before	After	Change
California	1990	45	52	+7
California	1970	38	43	+5
<i>Texas</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>+4</i>
Texas	2010	32	36	+4
Florida	1990	19	23	+4
Florida	1980	15	19	+4
<i>Florida</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>+3</i>
Texas	1990	27	30	+3
Texas	1980	24	27	+3
Florida	1970	12	15	+3
Texas	2020	36	38	+2
Florida	2010	25	27	+2
Arizona	2000	6	8	+2
Florida	2000	23	25	+2
Georgia	2000	11	13	+2
Texas	2000	30	32	+2
California	1980	43	45	+2

*Projection comes from the median electoral vote total for each state based on three projections released by Jonathan Cervas (Carnegie Mellon), the Brennan Center for Justice, and the American Redistricting Project.



Meanwhile, California and New York would sit among the largest losers in the same period. In fact, a four-seat decrease for California would rank as the second-largest decline in reapportionment cycles since 1970, trailing only the five that New York lost following the 1980 census.

California's projection would among the worst

States that have lost at least two U.S. House seats in reapportionment (including projected* change in 2030), since 1970

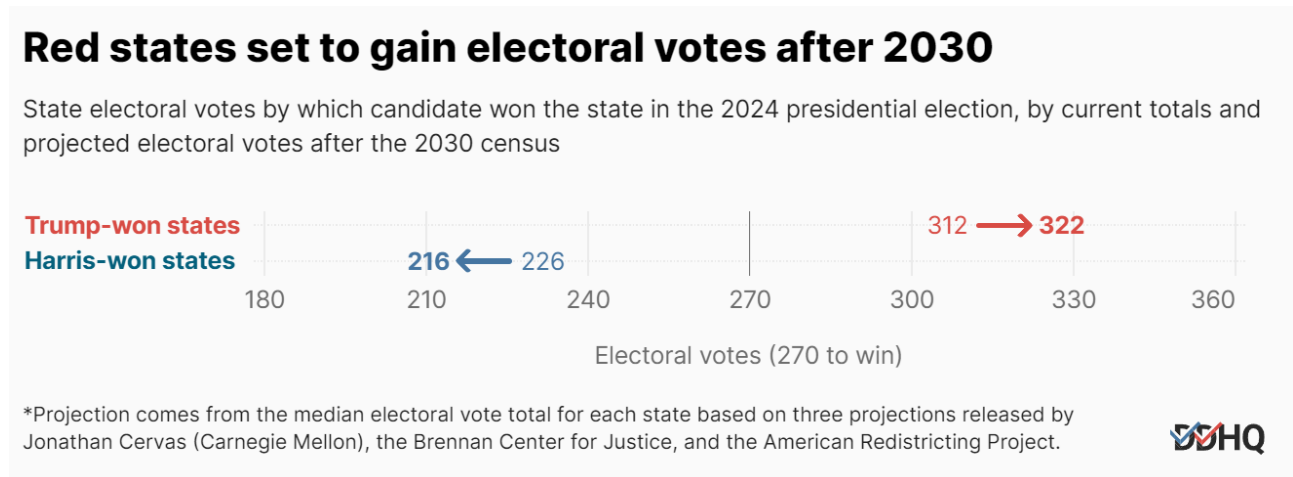
State	Year	Before	After	Change
New York	1980	39	34	-5
<i>California</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>-4</i>
New York	1990	34	31	-3
<i>New York</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>-2</i>
New York	2010	29	27	-2
Ohio	2010	18	16	-2
New York	2000	31	29	-2
Pennsylvania	2000	21	19	-2
Illinois	1990	22	20	-2
Michigan	1990	18	16	-2
Ohio	1990	21	19	-2
Pennsylvania	1990	23	21	-2
Illinois	1980	24	22	-2
Ohio	1980	23	21	-2
Pennsylvania	1980	25	23	-2
New York	1970	41	39	-2
Pennsylvania	1970	27	25	-2

*Projection comes from the median electoral vote total for each state based on three projections released by Jonathan Cervas (Carnegie Mellon), the Brennan Center for Justice, and the American Redistricting Project.



These projected seat swings would not only affect each state's representation in the House of Representatives, but they would also influence the outcome of presidential elections. A state's total number of electoral votes in the Electoral College, which determines the presidential winner, is the sum of its House seats plus its two senators in the U.S. Senate. For instance, California presently has 52 House seats and 54 electoral votes. In all, the Electoral College has 538 electoral votes based on the states' 435 representatives and 100 senators, plus three electoral votes assigned to the District of Columbia in accordance with [the 23rd Amendment](#).

And the electoral vote news is better for Republicans than Democrats. Looking at the 2024 presidential election, Trump defeated Harris 312-226 in the Electoral College, reaching (and surpassing) the 270 needed for a majority and victory. The projected seat changes would have increased Trump’s electoral vote haul to 322, a 10-vote increase. Just to put that in perspective, that would be akin to adding a medium-sized blue state to the GOP’s total — say Minnesota, which currently has 10 electoral votes (but is projected to lose one in 2030).



These shifts in electoral votes would take away the Democrats’ most common path to victory in recent years: the fabled “[Blue Wall](#)” battleground states across the Frost Belt. Democrats have long had a path to 270 electoral votes if they carried blue-leaning states and the swing states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Trump narrowly carried all of those states in 2024, but had Harris won them (on top of the states she did carry), she would have garnered exactly the 270 electoral votes needed to win. However, the projected electoral vote change would have made it so that Harris only reached 258 electoral votes.

As a result, Pennsylvania, which Trump carried by 1.7 percentage points, would no longer have been the “tipping-point” state in the 2024 election. That is, if you lined up all the states (and congressional district-level results in Maine and Nebraska) from most Republican to most Democratic by margin, Pennsylvania delivered the 270th electoral vote to whomever won it. Yet these apportionment projections would move the tipping-point state farther to the right, making Georgia (Trump +2.1) the decisive state based on the 2024 results.

In a way, these trends only make it more necessary for Democrats to compete in the states that they narrowly won in 2020. With the Blue Wall's reduced clout, Democrats would likely have to more consistently win Arizona and Georgia to get to 270, or also flip North Carolina, which has often been a "close, but no cigar" state for Democrats. But given the shifts in recent elections, the necessity of competing in those places is not really a huge change for Democrats. After all, Democrats lost the Blue Wall states in 2016 and 2024, and Trump's margin of victory in Georgia and North Carolina in the latter was not that different from his edge in Pennsylvania.

On the other side of the aisle, Republicans are in line to gain significant ground in red-leaning places like Texas and Florida, as well as make small gains in solidly red states like Idaho and Utah. This contrasts with the sizable projected Democratic losses in California and New York, two of that party's largest safe states. As long as the GOP retains the upper hand in Texas and Florida, they will not need to carry quite as many highly-competitive states as Democrats to win presidential races. In 2024, Democrats had to win three of the seven main swing states — the three in the Blue Wall — to reach 270. Under these projections, Republicans would only need the three competitive but light-red states that we could call their Red Wall — the Sun Belt trio of Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina — to reach 270. (Nevada was the other state among the core seven swing states in 2020-24.)

However, while these projections could be deleterious for Democrats, we should not overstate how determinative they will be in future presidential elections. Even though our political situation is quite polarized, we can expect shifts in the party coalitions and changes in the electorate to alter the political status quo as we know it. So, while the GOP stands to gain among the states it carried in 2024 and has tended to win in recent years, hypothetical Democratic gains in Sun Belt states could quickly alter the political calculus. For instance, if Texas became consistently competitive, the GOP would risk the loss of the bedrock of the party's Electoral College foundation.

Additionally, the projections are just that — projections. They certainly suggest some states are likely to gain or lose seats in reapportionment, but the finer details of one seat here or there is difficult to predict. Moreover, these projections are extrapolated from population estimates that cover the first half of the 2020s. Population estimates

unsurprisingly run closest to the final census figures in the years closest to the actual census, whereas ones produced in the middle of the decade are not quite as on target. Additionally, the decennial census itself is an imperfect exercise — the enumeration process [tends to undercount or overcount](#) the population in different states, which in turn can affect the final apportionment figures.

Lastly, political efforts and judicial rulings could change how apportionment works by 2030. Trump and other Republicans [have pushed](#) for apportionment [to be based](#) only on the citizen population rather than the population as a whole. Trump [has even called](#) for a mid-decade census that excludes anyone not in the country legally. Any legislation or executive action to these ends will go through lengthy legal challenges, but it is unclear how this could play out by the next time the nation reapportions the House. On that score, we will just have to wait and see. The same goes for finding out how many people live where in 2030.