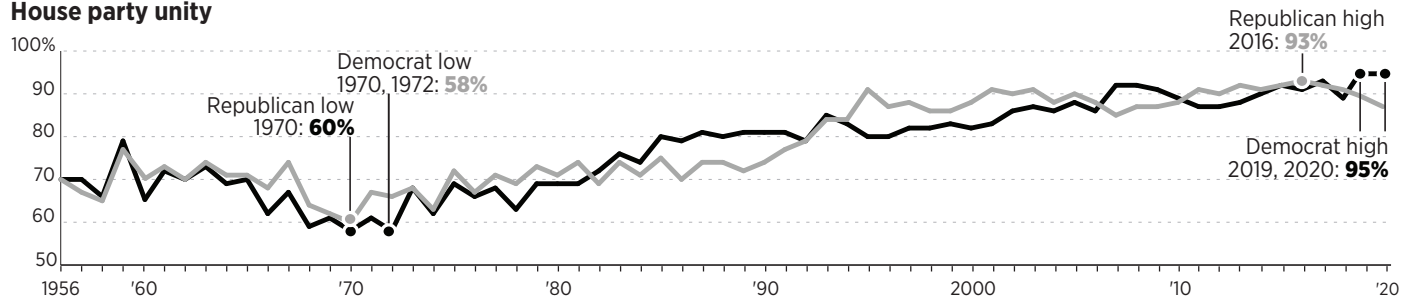


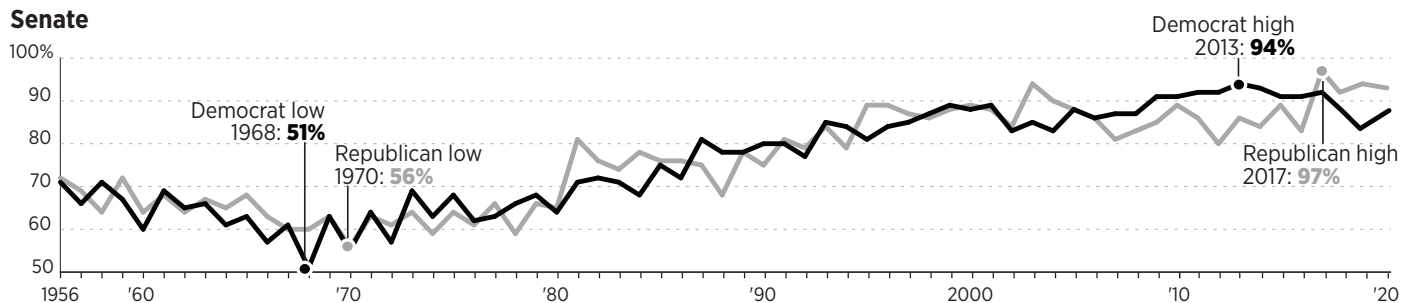
Majorities stick together, press their advantage

Though majorities typically face defections from both members worried about primaries and those worried about general elections, House Democrats and Senate Republicans both approached record levels of unity in 2020.

House party unity



Senate



Majority rules

The global pandemic that made legislating more difficult only widened the divide between the chambers led by opposing parties, resulting in fewer votes and high levels of partisanship.

Average chamber party unity scores:

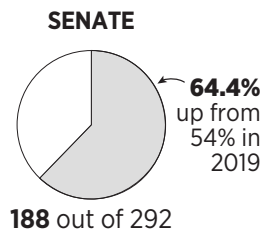
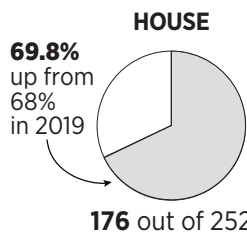
HOUSE

R 87% Lowest in a decade
D 95% Remains at record high level

SENATE

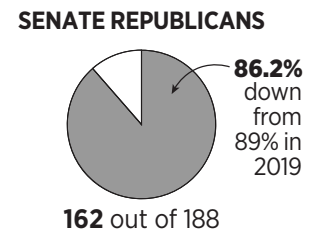
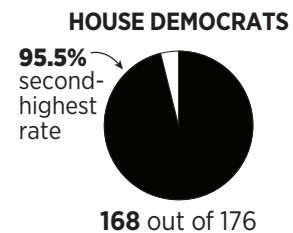
R 93% Second-highest since 2003
D 88% Lowest since 2004

Frequency of party unity votes:



AVERAGE FOR BOTH CHAMBERS:
66.9%

How often the majority won:



AVERAGE FOR BOTH CHAMBERS:
90.7%

Background: Party Unity

Roll-call votes used for the party unity study are those on which a majority of Democrats opposed a majority of Republicans. Support indicates the percentage of time members voted in agreement with their party on such party unity votes. The tables below also show the number of party unity votes on which each party was victorious and the number of instances in which either party voted unanimously.

AVERAGE PARTY UNITY SCORE BY CHAMBER

| | | SUPPORT | |
|----------|-------------|---------|------|
| | | 2019 | 2020 |
| HOUSE | Democrats | 95% | 95% |
| | Republicans | 89 | 87 |
| SENATE | Democrats | 84 | 88 |
| | Republicans | 94 | 93 |
| CONGRESS | Democrats | 93 | 97 |
| | Republicans | 90 | 96 |

Average scores for chamber and party are calculated based on all party unity votes for which members were eligible. A member's failure to vote lowers the score for the group.

VICTORIES IN PARTY UNITY VOTES

| YEAR | HOUSE | | SENATE | | CONGRESS | |
|------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans |
| 2020 | 168 votes | 8 | 26 | 170 | 194 | 178 |
| 2019 | 458 | 18 | 26 | 205 | 484 | 223 |
| 2018 | 23 | 269 | 28 | 108 | 51 | 337 |
| 2017 | 51 | 488 | 23 | 201 | 74 | 689 |
| 2016 | 40 | 416 | 53 | 22 | 93 | 438 |
| 2015 | 68 | 460 | 93 | 142 | 161 | 602 |
| 2014 | 55 | 353 | 224 | 20 | 279 | 373 |
| 2013 | 50 | 389 | 171 | 32 | 221 | 421 |
| 2012 | 67 | 411 | 103 | 47 | 170 | 458 |
| 2011 | 82 | 634 | 87 | 33 | 169 | 667 |
| 2010 | 236 | 28 | 196 | 39 | 432 | 67 |
| 2009 | 473 | 29 | 264 | 22 | 737 | 51 |
| 2008 | 342 | 25 | 60 | 51 | 402 | 76 |
| 2007 | 658 | 72 | 179 | 87 | 837 | 159 |
| 2006 | 59 | 236 | 53 | 107 | 112 | 343 |
| 2005 | 50 | 278 | 47 | 182 | 97 | 460 |
| 2004 | 42 | 213 | 28 | 85 | 70 | 298 |
| 2003 | 39 | 310 | 56 | 250 | 95 | 560 |
| 2002 | 39 | 170 | 42 | 73 | 81 | 243 |
| 2001 | 27 | 177 | 95 | 115 | 122 | 292 |
| 2000 | 77 | 182 | 31 | 114 | 108 | 296 |
| 1999 | 58 | 177 | 77 | 211 | 135 | 388 |
| 1998 | 80 | 216 | 61 | 114 | 141 | 330 |

UNANIMOUS VOTING ON UNITY VOTES

| YEAR | HOUSE | | SENATE | | CONGRESS | |
|------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans | Democrats | Republicans |
| 2020 | 86 | 76 | 107 | 138 | 193 | 214 |
| 2019 | 242 | 162 | 106 | 158 | 348 | 320 |
| 2018 | 117 | 91 | 50 | 92 | 167 | 183 |
| 2017 | 242 | 176 | 125 | 160 | 367 | 336 |
| 2016 | 109 | 118 | 24 | 11 | 133 | 129 |
| 2015 | 174 | 177 | 96 | 77 | 270 | 254 |
| 2014 | 92 | 159 | 180 | 76 | 272 | 235 |
| 2013 | 97 | 152 | 106 | 62 | 203 | 214 |
| 2012 | 40 | 99 | 60 | 19 | 100 | 118 |
| 2011 | 76 | 209 | 55 | 31 | 131 | 240 |
| 2010 | 10 | 91 | 67 | 106 | 77 | 197 |
| 2009 | 29 | 144 | 79 | 74 | 108 | 218 |
| 2008 | 66 | 96 | 30 | 19 | 96 | 115 |
| 2007 | 170 | 177 | 102 | 35 | 272 | 212 |
| 2006 | 70 | 62 | 34 | 30 | 104 | 92 |
| 2005 | 82 | 91 | 69 | 59 | 151 | 150 |
| 2004 | 70 | 77 | 3 | 31 | 73 | 108 |
| 2003 | 94 | 109 | 32 | 130 | 126 | 239 |
| 2002 | 37 | 54 | 12 | 23 | 49 | 77 |
| 2001 | 1 | 66 | 37 | 55 | 38 | 121 |
| 2000 | 1 | 67 | 52 | 19 | 53 | 86 |
| 1999 | 11 | 59 | 100 | 63 | 111 | 122 |
| 1998 | 8 | 42 | 46 | 33 | 54 | 75 |

History: Party Unity

The table below on the left shows how frequently a majority of Democrats aligned against a majority of Republicans. The average scores in the other columns for each chamber are computed including absences.

| YEAR | Frequency of Unity Votes | | House Average Scores | | Senate Average Scores | |
|------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | HOUSE | SENATE | DEMOCRATS | REPUBLICANS | DEMOCRATS | REPUBLICANS |
| 2020 | 69.8% | 64.4% | 95% | 87% | 88% | 93% |
| 2019 | 68.0 | 54.0 | 95 | 89 | 84 | 94 |
| 2018 | 58.6 | 49.6 | 89 | 91 | 87 | 92 |
| 2017 | 76.0 | 68.9 | 93 | 92 | 92 | 97 |
| 2016 | 73.4 | 46.0 | 91 | 93 | 91 | 83 |
| 2015 | 75.1 | 69.3 | 92 | 92 | 91 | 89 |
| 2014 | 72.6 | 66.7 | 90 | 91 | 93 | 84 |
| 2013 | 68.6 | 69.8 | 88 | 92 | 94 | 86 |
| 2012 | 72.8 | 59.8 | 87 | 90 | 92 | 80 |
| 2011 | 75.8 | 51.1 | 87 | 91 | 92 | 86 |
| 2010 | 40.0 | 78.6 | 89 | 88 | 91 | 89 |
| 2009 | 50.9 | 72.0 | 91 | 87 | 91 | 85 |
| 2008 | 53.3 | 51.6 | 92 | 87 | 87 | 83 |
| 2007 | 62.0 | 60.2 | 92 | 85 | 87 | 81 |
| 2006 | 54.5 | 57.3 | 86 | 88 | 86 | 86 |
| 2005 | 49.0 | 62.6 | 88 | 90 | 88 | 88 |
| 2004 | 47.0 | 52.3 | 86 | 88 | 83 | 90 |
| 2003 | 51.7 | 66.7 | 87 | 91 | 85 | 94 |
| 2002 | 43.3 | 45.5 | 86 | 90 | 83 | 84 |
| 2001 | 40.2 | 55.3 | 83 | 91 | 89 | 88 |
| 2000 | 43.2 | 48.7 | 82 | 88 | 88 | 89 |
| 1999 | 47.3 | 62.8 | 83 | 86 | 89 | 88 |
| 1998 | 55.5 | 55.7 | 82 | 86 | 87 | 86 |
| 1997 | 50.4 | 50.3 | 82 | 88 | 85 | 87 |
| 1996 | 56.4 | 62.4 | 80 | 87 | 84 | 89 |
| 1995 | 73.2 | 68.8 | 80 | 91 | 81 | 89 |
| 1994 | 61.8 | 51.7 | 83 | 84 | 84 | 79 |
| 1993 | 65.5 | 67.1 | 85 | 84 | 85 | 84 |
| 1992 | 64.5 | 53.0 | 79 | 79 | 77 | 79 |
| 1991 | 55.1 | 49.3 | 81 | 77 | 80 | 81 |
| 1990 | 49.1 | 54.3 | 81 | 74 | 80 | 75 |
| 1989 | 56.3 | 35.3 | 81 | 72 | 78 | 78 |
| 1988 | 47.0 | 42.5 | 80 | 74 | 78 | 68 |
| 1987 | 63.7 | 40.7 | 81 | 74 | 81 | 75 |
| 1986 | 56.5 | 52.3 | 79 | 70 | 72 | 76 |
| 1985 | 61.0 | 49.6 | 80 | 75 | 75 | 76 |
| 1984 | 47.1 | 40.0 | 74 | 71 | 68 | 78 |
| 1983 | 55.6 | 43.7 | 76 | 74 | 71 | 74 |
| 1982 | 36.4 | 43.4 | 72 | 69 | 72 | 76 |
| 1981 | 37.4 | 47.8 | 69 | 74 | 71 | 81 |
| 1980 | 37.6 | 45.8 | 69 | 71 | 64 | 65 |
| 1979 | 47.3 | 46.7 | 69 | 73 | 68 | 66 |
| 1978 | 33.2 | 45.2 | 63 | 69 | 66 | 59 |
| 1977 | 42.2 | 42.4 | 68 | 71 | 63 | 66 |
| 1976 | 35.9 | 37.2 | 66 | 67 | 62 | 61 |
| 1975 | 48.4 | 47.8 | 69 | 72 | 68 | 64 |
| 1974 | 29.4 | 44.3 | 62 | 63 | 63 | 59 |
| 1973 | 41.8 | 39.9 | 68 | 68 | 69 | 64 |
| 1972 | 27.1 | 36.5 | 58 | 66 | 57 | 61 |
| 1971 | 37.8 | 41.6 | 61 | 67 | 64 | 63 |
| 1970 | 27.1 | 35.2 | 58 | 60 | 55 | 56 |
| 1969 | 31.1 | 36.3 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 63 |
| 1968 | 35.2 | 32.0 | 59 | 64 | 51 | 60 |
| 1967 | 36.3 | 34.6 | 67 | 74 | 61 | 60 |
| 1966 | 41.5 | 50.2 | 62 | 68 | 57 | 63 |
| 1965 | 52.2 | 41.9 | 70 | 71 | 63 | 68 |
| 1964 | 54.9 | 35.7 | 69 | 71 | 61 | 65 |
| 1963 | 48.7 | 47.2 | 73 | 74 | 66 | 67 |
| 1962 | 46.0 | 41.1 | 70 | 70 | 65 | 64 |
| 1961 | 50.0 | 62.3 | 72 | 73 | 69 | 68 |
| 1960 | 52.7 | 36.7 | 65 | 70 | 60 | 64 |
| 1959 | 55.2 | 47.9 | 79 | 77 | 67 | 72 |
| 1958 | 39.8 | 43.5 | 66 | 65 | 71 | 64 |
| 1957 | 59.0 | 35.5 | 70 | 67 | 66 | 69 |
| 1956 | 43.8 | 53.1 | 70 | 70 | 71 | 72 |

Tallying party unity votes

In the House in 2020, the two parties aligned against each other on 176 of 252 “yea” or “nay” roll call votes, or 69.8 percent of the time — up about two percentage points from 2019. In the Senate, the parties opposed each other on 188 of 292 roll calls, or 64.4 percent of the time. That’s up from last year’s 54 percent. A list of roll-call votes that pitted majorities of the two parties against each other is available upon request from CQ Roll Call.

Calculations of average scores by chamber and party are based on all eligible “yea” or “nay” votes, whether or not all members participated. Under this methodology, average support and opposition scores are reduced when members do not vote. Party and chamber averages are not strictly comparable to individual member scores.

Also, in the member score tables, Sens. Angus King, I-Maine, and Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., were treated as if they were Democrats when calculating their support and opposition scores. They do not, however, qualify to be listed among the party’s leaders in any category.