

# Faculty at Home

INSIGHT AND CONVERSATION  
WITH MIDDLEBURY PROFESSORS

# **U.S. Politics in a Pandemic**

April 22, 2020

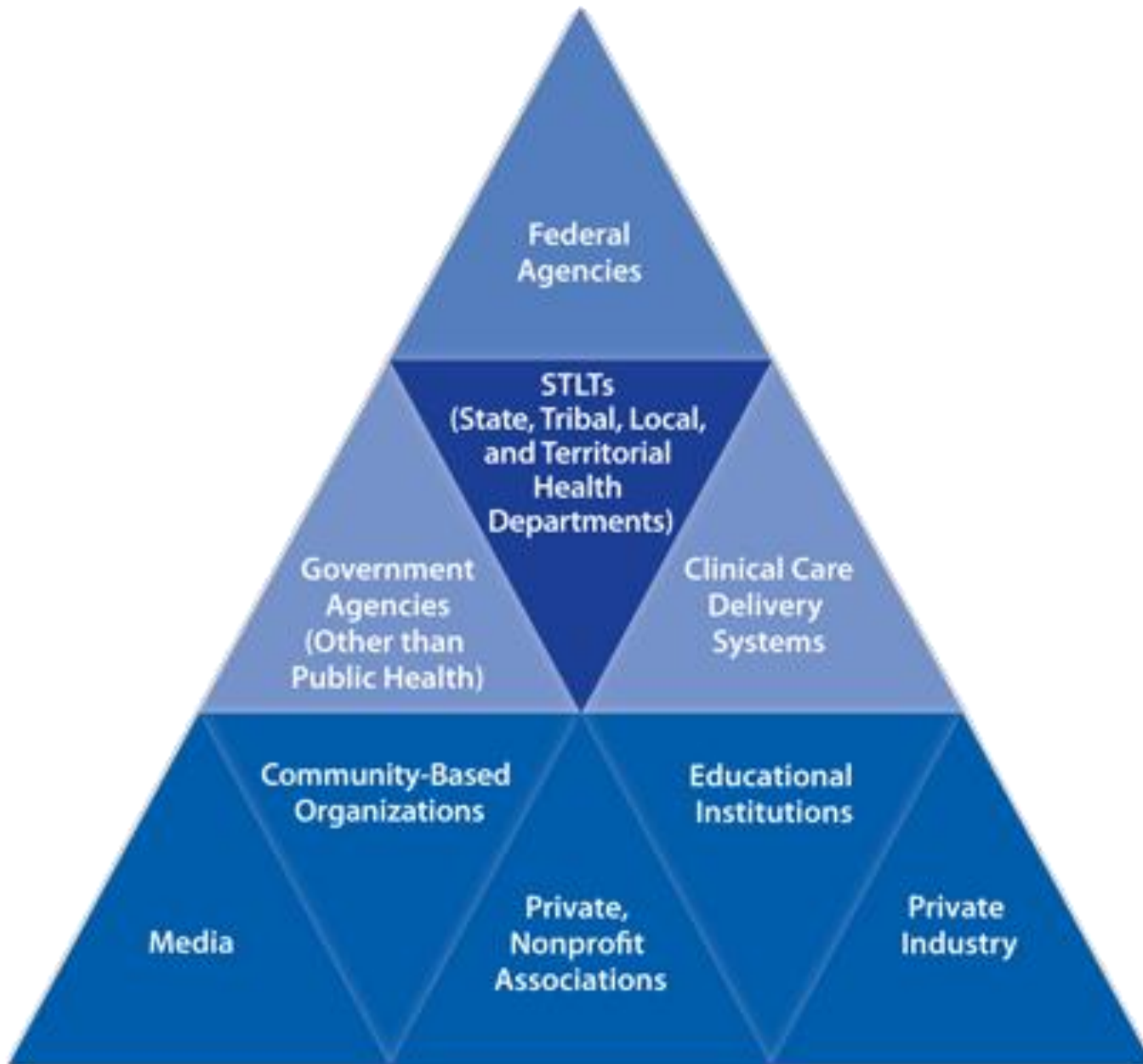
Bert Johnson  
Political Science Department  
Middlebury College  
bnjohnso@middlebury.edu

- **Government Performance**
- **Political Consequences**

# **Government Performance**

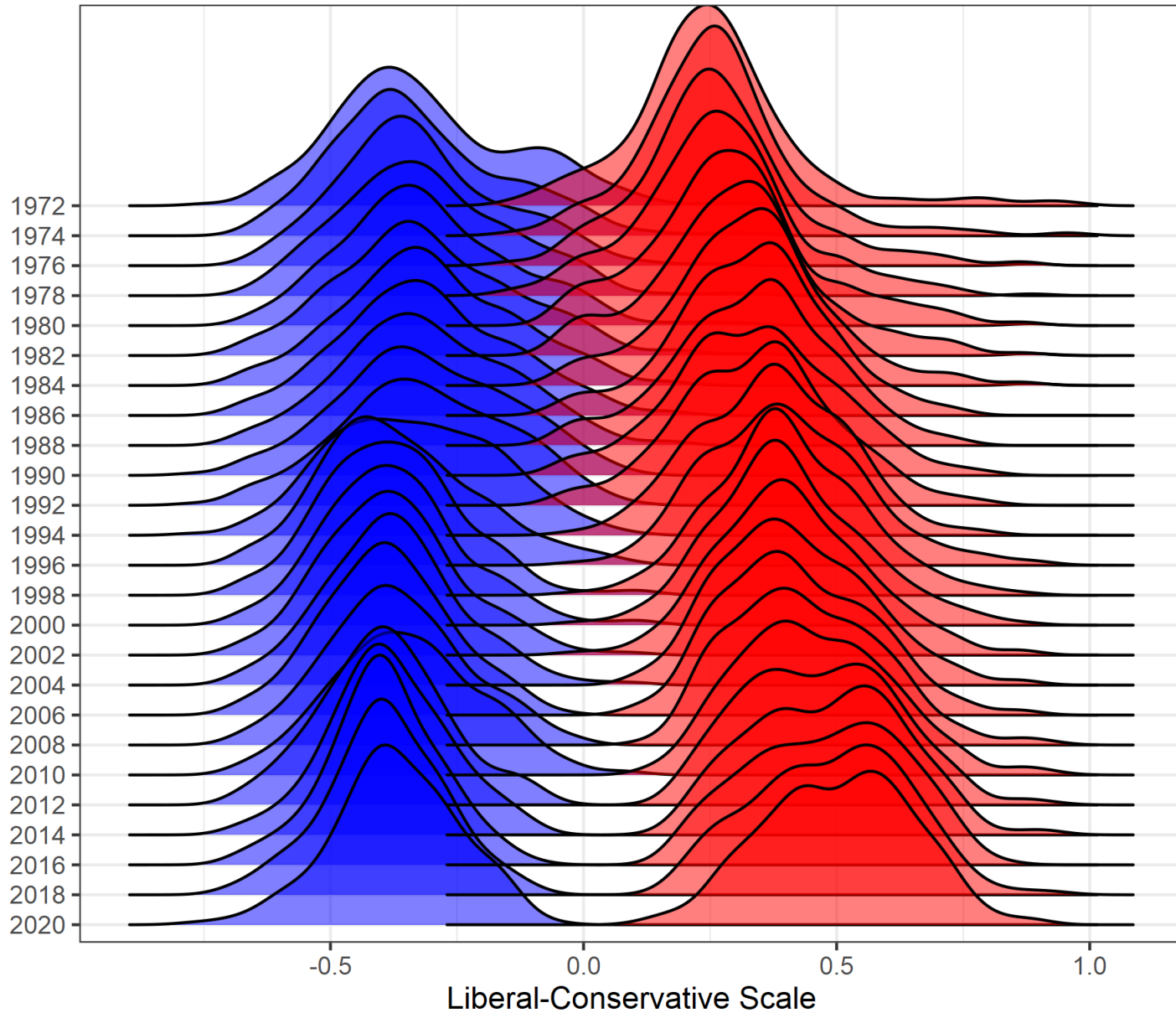
- Federalism
  - Centralization and Decentralization

# Components of the Public Health System



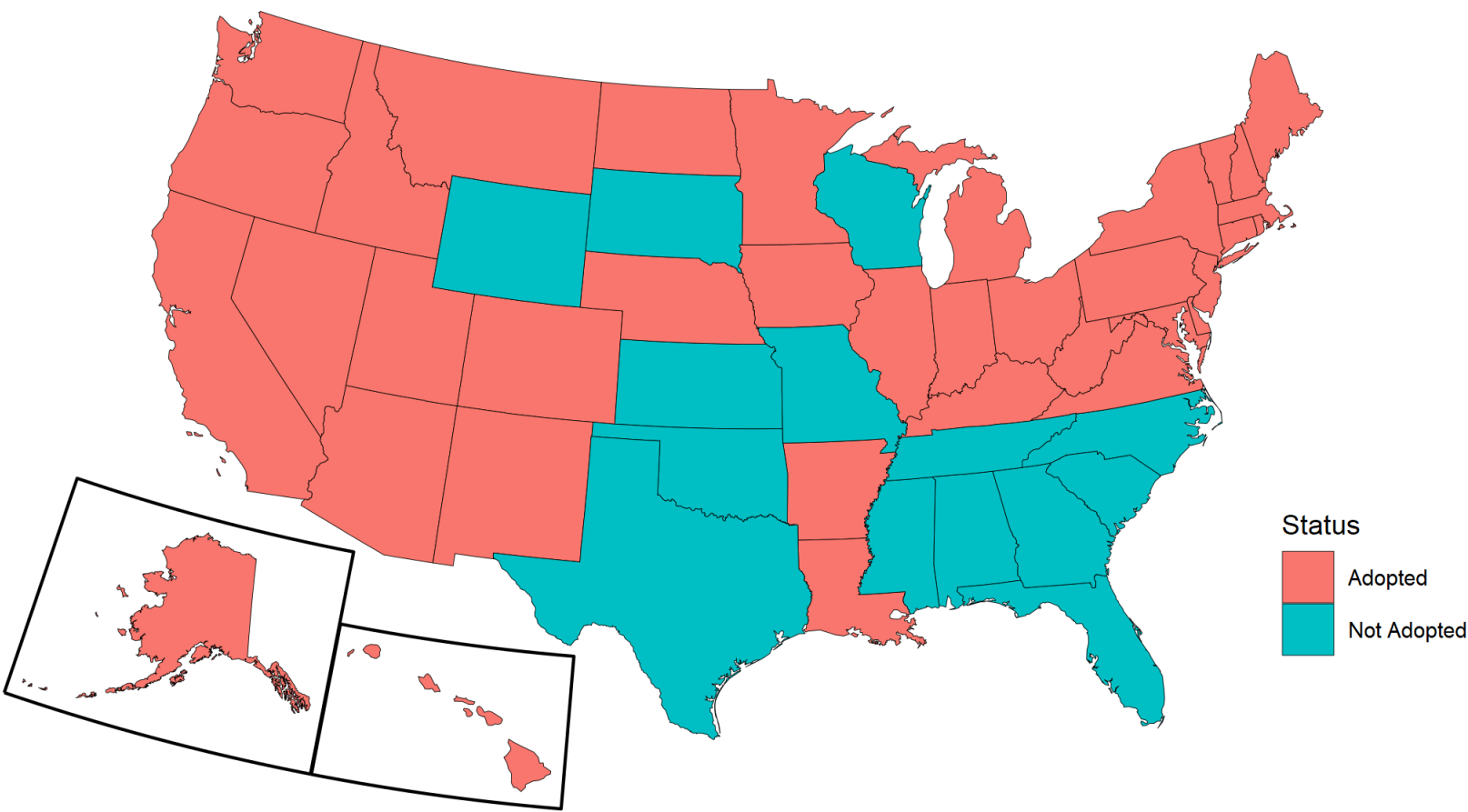
# The Parties in Congress Have Moved Apart Since the 1970s

House Members' Ideological Positions  
Democrats in blue, Republicans in red.



Source: DWNominate data from Voteview.com.

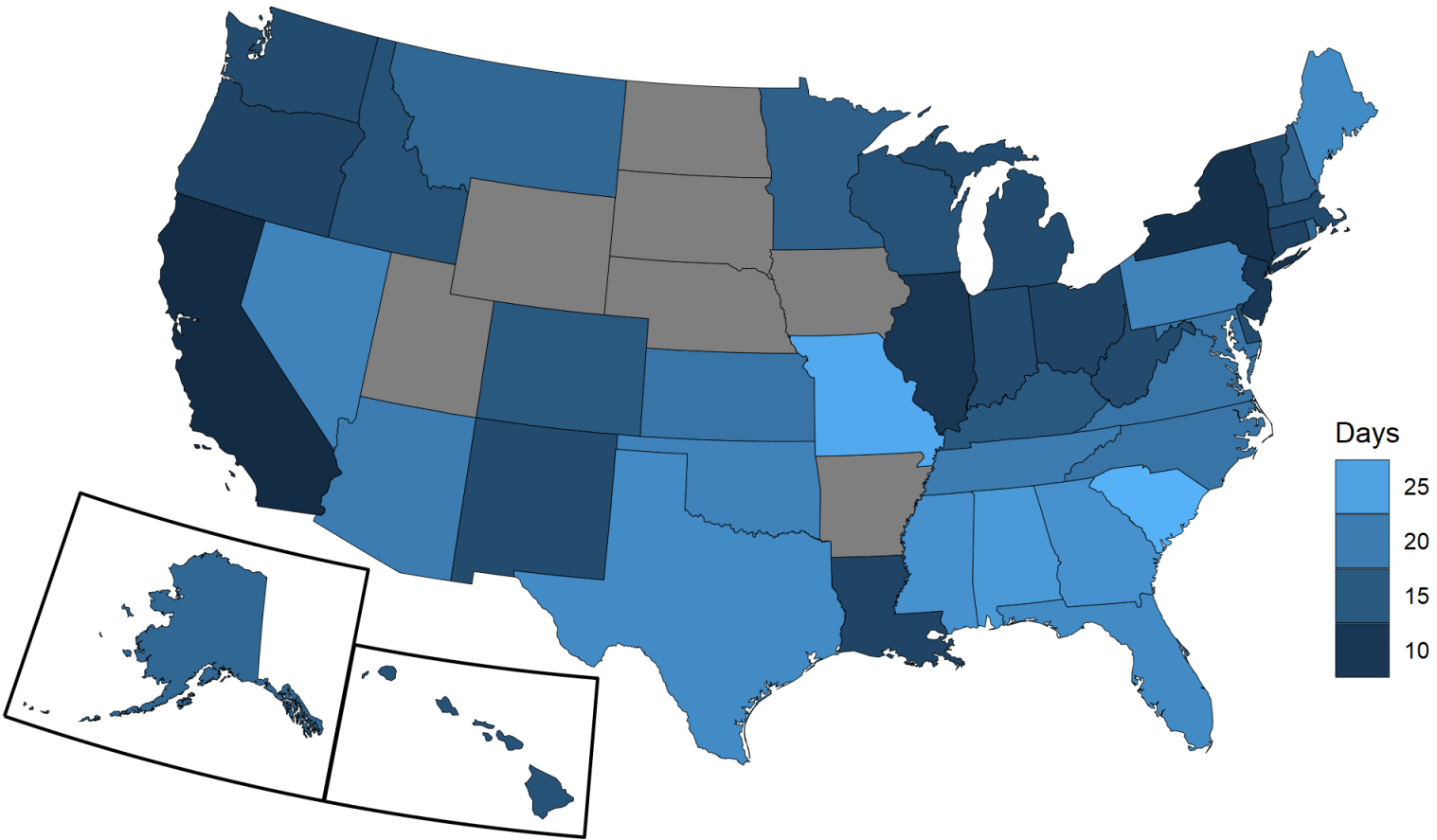
# State Medicaid Expansion Status, March 2020



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, kff.org.

# Timing of Statewide Closure Orders, March and April 2020

Number of days after March 11 that state instituted order. (Gray=No statewide order.)

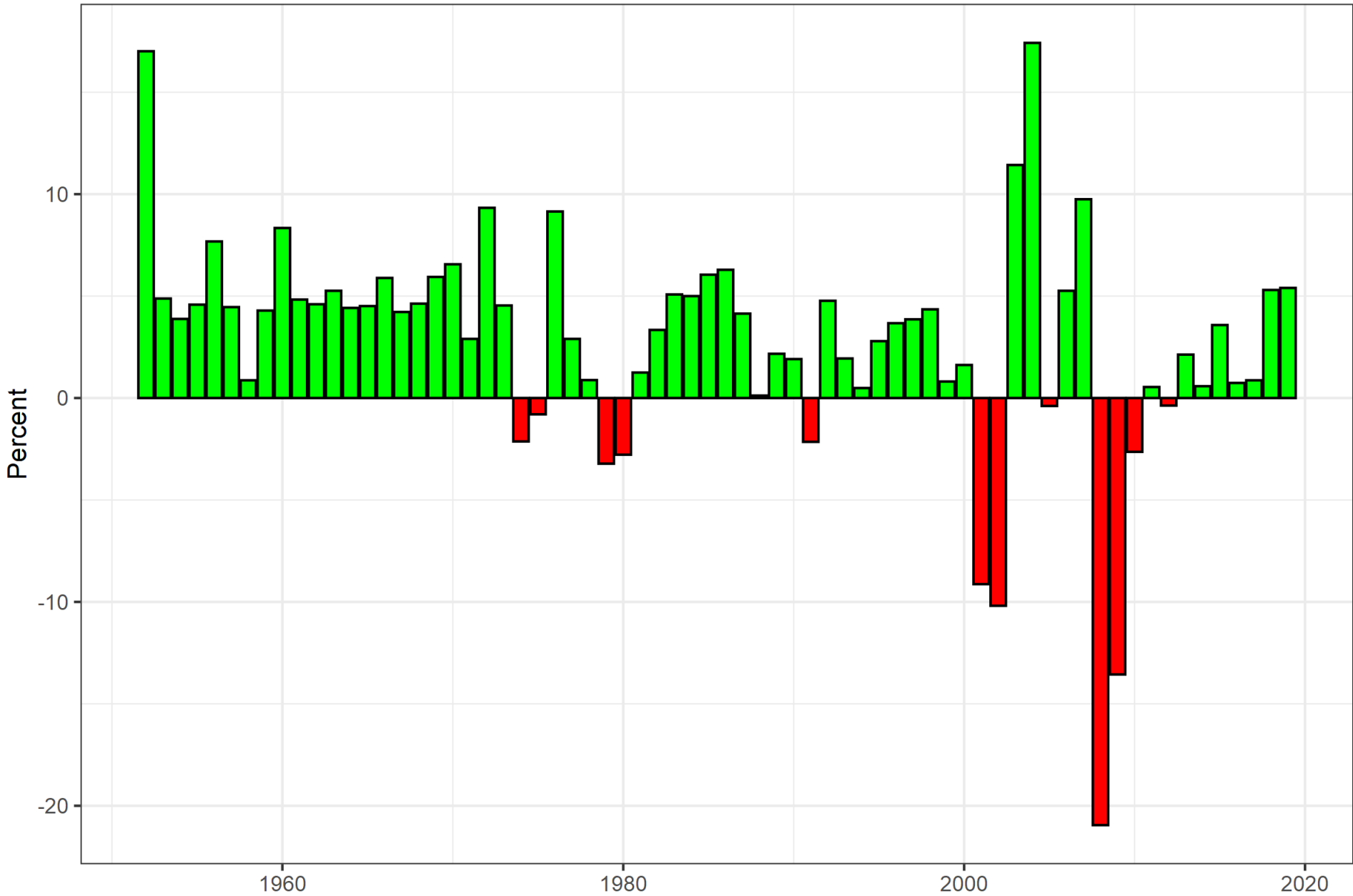


Note: Specifics of state orders vary.  
Source: Ballotpedia.org.



# State and Local Annual Revenue Changes, 1952-2019

Percent change in state and local revenues vs. previous budget cycle, adjusted for inflation



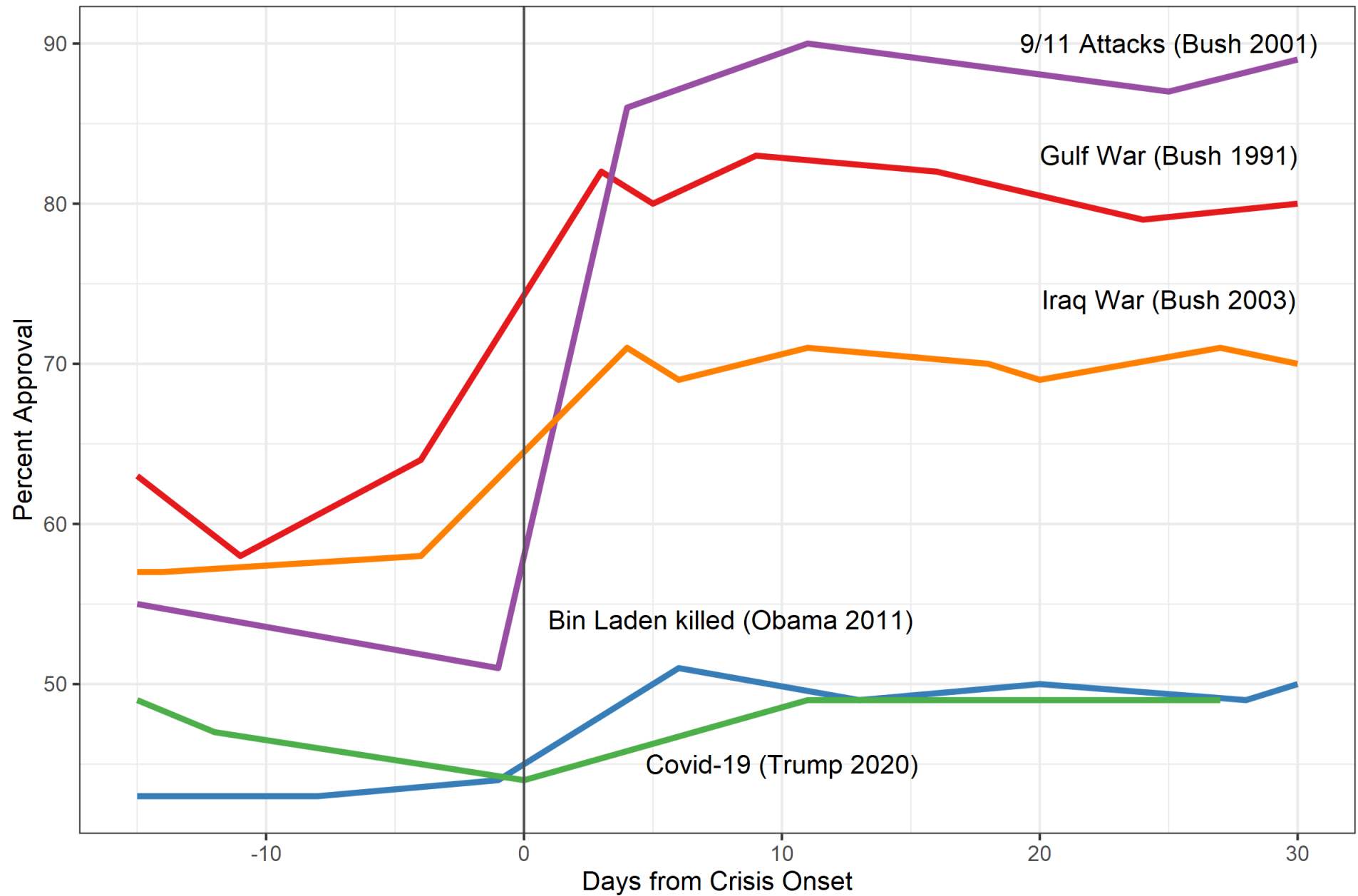
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; National Association of State Budget Officers (2018-19 estimates).

# **Political Consequences**

- 2020 Election
- The long run

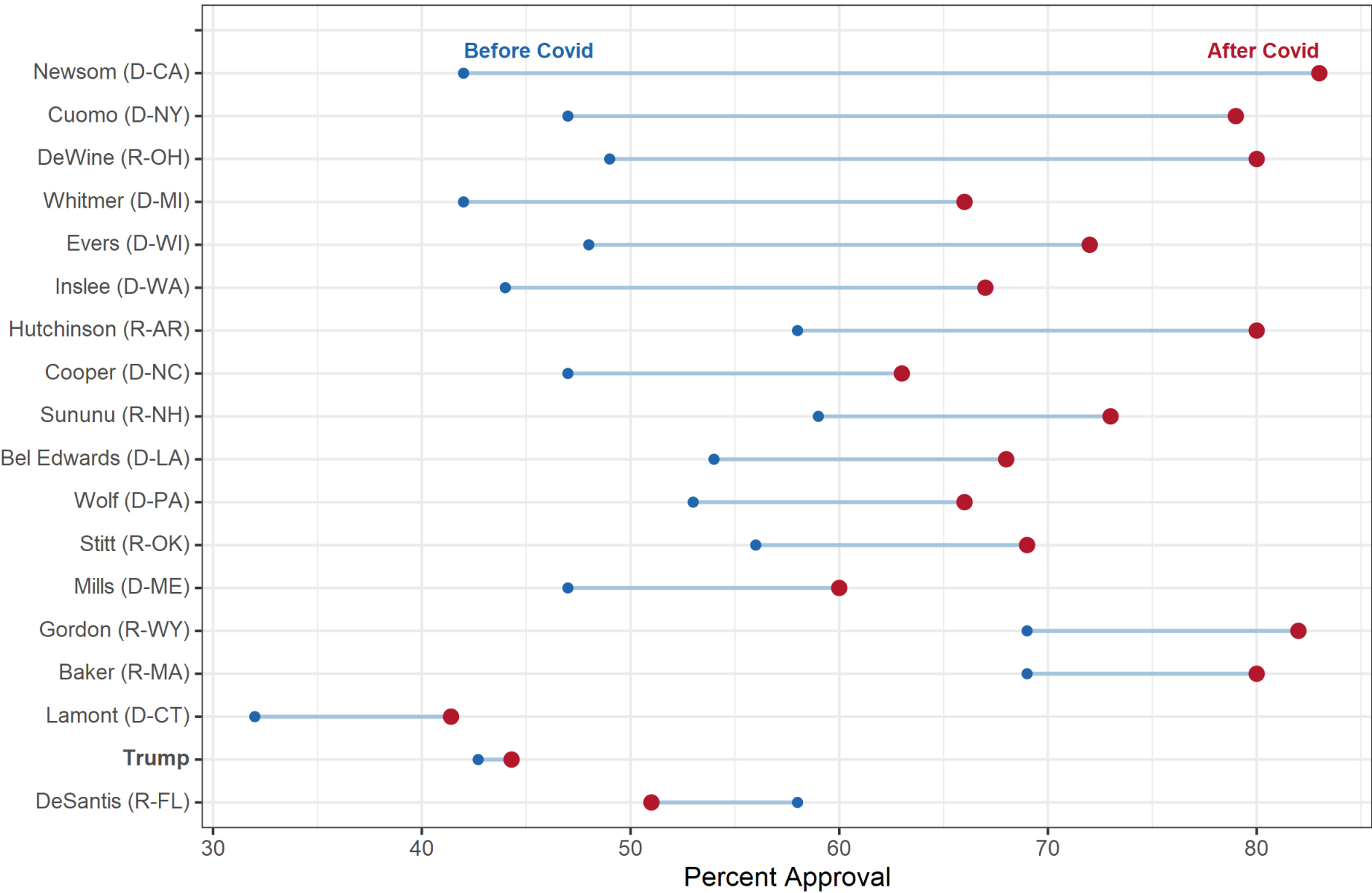
# Public Opinion Rally Effects for Various Presidents

Presidential approval rating tends to rise in a crisis



# Approval has Risen for Trump and Most Governors

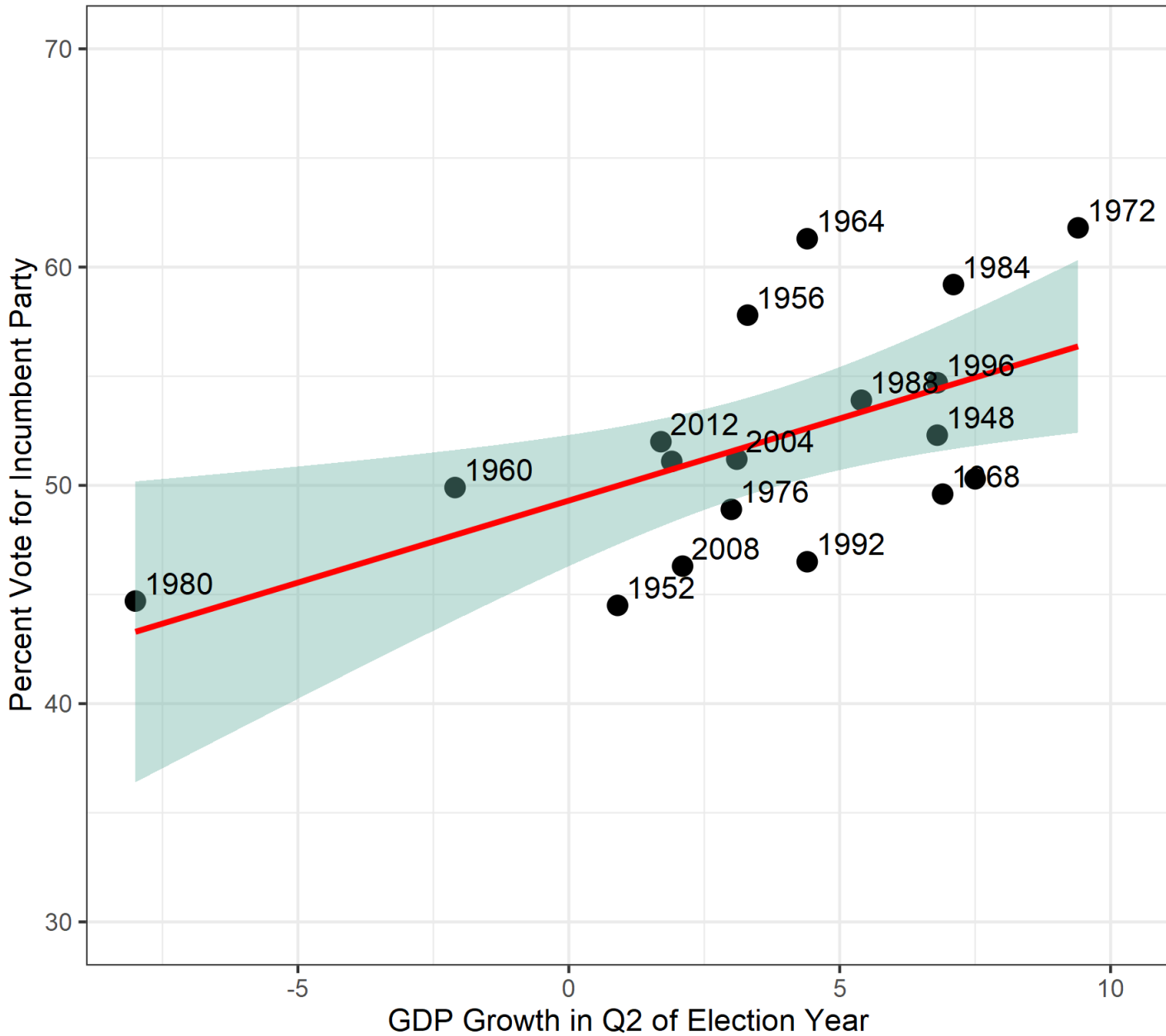
But most governors' rally effects exceed Trump's



Source: Polls from Morning Consult, FiveThirtyEight.com, Bangor Daily News, & Hartford Courant.

# The Economy and Presidential Election Results

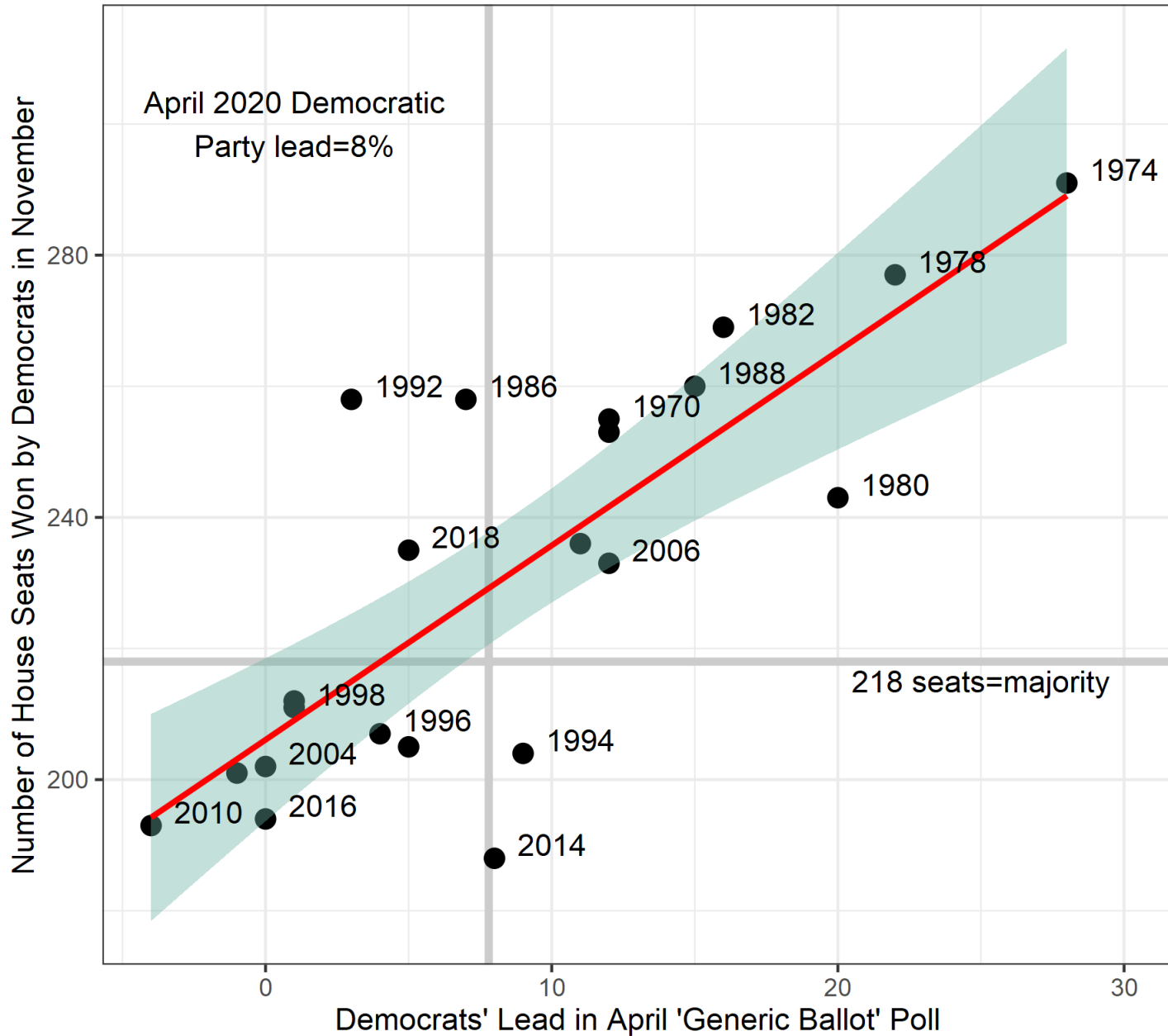
## GDP Growth and Incumbent Two-Party Vote Share



Source: Election results; GDP data from Bureau of Economic Analysis.

# The April Generic Ballot and House Election Results

Early polls are not as useful as later polls



## **Conclusion**

- A 'critical juncture' and disruption of old modes?