



The Almanac of American Politics 2000

Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa

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How was the 1998 election different from all other elections? Not in party strength: Republicans and Democrats won almost exactly the same percentages of the vote and number of House seats as in 1996. Nor was there any great mandate for change: Only a handful of incumbents were defeated. Turnout was unchanged, too, staying for the most part within the same 36 percent to 40 percent range of all off-year elections in the past quarter century.

The difference was a fundamental change in mood. In 1998, Americans voted against what a classic 1988 editorial in *The Economist* called "crunchiness" and for what the magazine called "sogginess." Crunchy choices are binary; the light switch is either off or on, with clearly distinct consequences. Soggy choices represent only a marginal, perhaps imperceptible change. In the prosperous, peaceful late 1990s, Americans were comfortable with the incorrigibly soggy Bill Clinton--and deeply uncomfortable with the aggressive crunchiness of the most visible congressional Republican, Newt Gingrich. The 1998 elections--and elections are always a crunchy process--saw no significantly different partisan balance. But they did produce very different outcomes for the two party leaders.

The *Almanac of American Politics 2000*, which very much tends to the crunchy side, is a vital tool in assessing today's increasingly soggy political scene. No other book offers so much information plus such a clear road map to our political present and future (be it crunchy or soggy). In addition to a provocative new Introduction by Michael Barone, this completely updated edition includes:

- H Insightful, colorful profiles and photographs of all 535 members of Congress and all 50 governors

- H Voting records on important legislation

- H Revealing descriptions of each state and congressional district with historical, economic, social, and political background information

- H Congressional ratings by *National Journal* and a dozen influential interest groups

- H Updated maps showing each congressional district, including recent redistricting changes

- H 1998 election results for each member of Congress and presidential results by congressional district

- H Exclusive election forecasts for every 2000 race from Washington's foremost political handicapper, Charlie Cook

- H Access to the *Almanac Web Edition*, providing up-to-date information on key votes of the 106th Congress, results from special and interim elections, and more

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