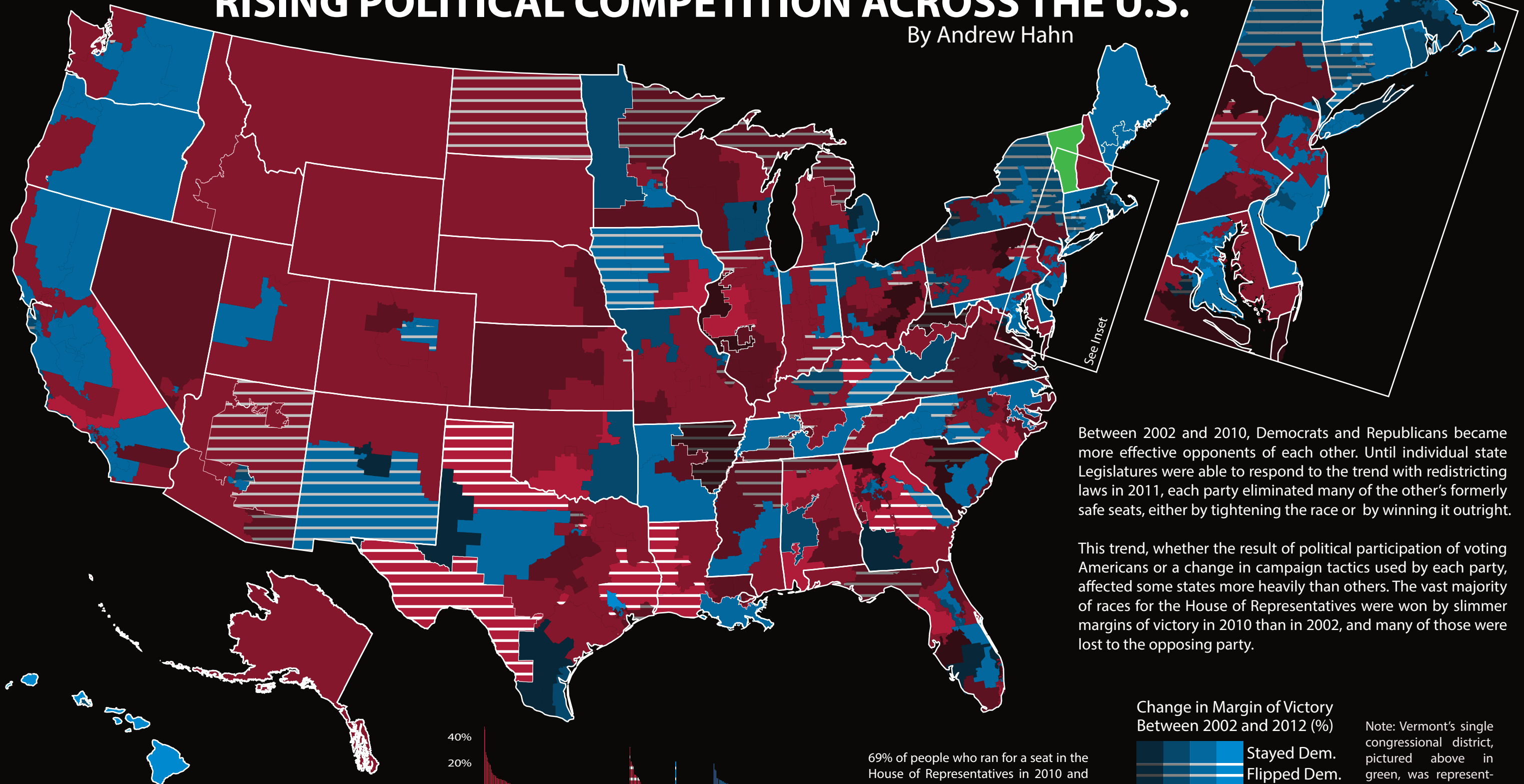


MAPPING THE ODDS: RISING POLITICAL COMPETITION ACROSS THE U.S.

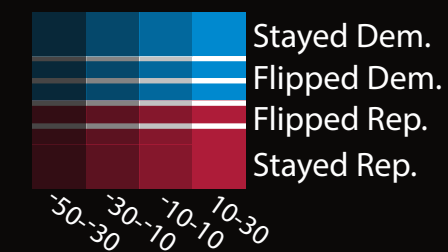
By Andrew Hahn



Between 2002 and 2010, Democrats and Republicans became more effective opponents of each other. Until individual state Legislatures were able to respond to the trend with redistricting laws in 2011, each party eliminated many of the other's formerly safe seats, either by tightening the race or by winning it outright.

This trend, whether the result of political participation of voting Americans or a change in campaign tactics used by each party, affected some states more heavily than others. The vast majority of races for the House of Representatives were won by slimmer margins of victory in 2010 than in 2002, and many of those were lost to the opposing party.

Change in Margin of Victory
Between 2002 and 2012 (%)



Note: Vermont's single congressional district, pictured above in green, was represented by an Independent in 2002 and a Democrat in 2010.

69% of people who ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in 2010 and won did so with a slimmer margin of victory than the same seat's 2002 winner. 12% of those winners were of a different political party than the 2002 winner.

USA Albers Equal Area Conic (USGS)
Centered at 96°W, 23°N

Shapefile: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER Dataset
Data compiled by the Federal Elections Commission (www.fec.gov)