Republicans from the South have transformed American politics. The collapse of the solid Democratic South and the emergence of southern Republicanism, first in presidential politics and later in elections for Congress, have established a new reality for America; two permanently competitive national political parties.

Across the nation Republicans as well as Democrats now realistically believe they have fighting chances to win both the White House and Congress in any particular election.

In 1950 there were no Republican senators from the South and only 2 Republican representatives out of 105 in the House delegation.

A half-century later Republicans constituted majorities of the South’s congressional delegations—13 of 22 southern senators and 71 of 125 representatives.

The old southern politics was transparently undemocratic and thoroughly racist.

Republican politicians hold majorities in the region’s House and Senate seats, but their majorities are much smaller than those traditionally maintained by southern Democrats.

Modern competitive two-party politics is grounded in the region’s rapidly growing and immensely diverse population. The central political cleavage, as ancient as the South itself, involves race.

The rise of a middle and upper-middle class has produced millions of voters with substantial incomes subject to substantial federal and state taxation.

The Great Depression and New Deal maintained...

Gradually... the older Democratic segregationists departed, they were replaced by younger white Democratic politicians who understood that cultivating biracial coalitions was essential to their survival.

By and large, Republican House members from the South emphasize their economic and social conservatism.
Ibid., ¶ 2, line 1 – “Striking partisan changes in southern representation occurred during the 1990s.”

Ibid, ¶ 3, line 1 – “In the South the Reagan realignment of the 1980s was a momentous achievement.”

Ibid., ¶ 4, line 1 – “The Great White Switch in presidential voting appeared immediately after Congress passed and Democratic president Lyndon Johnson signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act.”

Ibid, ¶ 4, line 9 – “Not until Reagan’s presidency did more southern whites begin to think of themselves as Republicans than as Democrats.”

p. 533, ¶ 1, line 1 – “Important as his electoral victories were, Reagan’s presidency had a far more crucial impact upon many southern whites. His optimistic conservatism and successful performance in office made the Republican party respectable and useful for millions of southern whites.”

Ibid, ¶ 2, line 1 – “The Republican approach to top-down party building in the South was modeled upon its successful strategy in presidential elections: realign white conservatives as a reliable source of Republican support and neutralize white moderates as a consistent foundation of Democratic strength.”

Ibid., ¶ 4, line 2 – “The California Republican turned out to be the most popular president among southern whites since Franklin Roosevelt.”

p. 534, ¶ 3, the whole ¶ – “Thus the South’s political transformation holds extraordinary consequences for America. Old-fashioned...”