# UNSPLIT THE VOTE!

**US voter demand for alternative parties is growing, but remains unmet.**
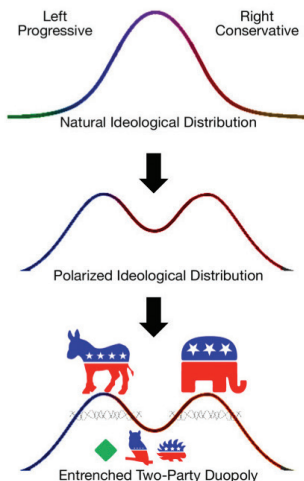


"Third party needed" [Gallup]

Independent affiliation

Why the gap?

Third-party registration [Ballot-Access.org]
Votes for non-major-party congressional candidates
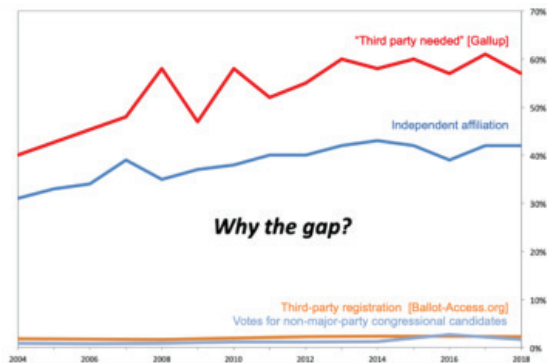
**Why does the US have just one party more than China?**

a. Access barriers to ballots and debates?

b. Big Money in politics?

c. Collusion between the two major parties?

d. Duverger's Law?

## DUVERGER'S LAW

All of the above may be true, but only one can explain why the US has had a two-party system for more than 200 years! The root cause of the two-party system is **Duverger's Law:** our primitive choose-one Plurality Voting method causes similar candidates to split the vote, so parties consolidate into two, left and right of center.



Left Progressive — Right Conservative

Natural Ideological Distribution

Polarized Ideological Distribution

Entrenched Two-Party Duopoly

The US will have no viable third party, fringe or moderate, until we change the voting method.
**What should the voting method be?**

The simplest solution is
# APPROVAL VOTING:
Thumbs up or down on every candidate.

## Approval Voting can use today's ballots and software.

Filling in a bubble means approval—approve as many candidates as you like. This small change eliminates vote splitting, e.g. the wasted-vote dilemma, where voters must decide between their true favorite and an "electable" frontrunner. Does expressing an opinion on multiple candidates violate the old "One man, one vote" principle? Not at all, but the principle needs updating: **ONE VOTER, ONE BALLOT!**

| Fill in the bubble for each candidate that you approve of |  |
|---|---|
| **George W. Bush** Republican Party | ○ |
| **Al Gore** Democratic Party | ● |
| **Harry Browne** Libertarian Party | ○ |
| **Ralph Nader** Green Party | ● |
| **Pat Buchanan** Reform Party | ○ |

**Approval Voting is the simplest version of Score Voting,** where you rate each candidate on a scale, e.g. 0–5. Approval Voting is 0 or 1, thumbs up or down. For more expressiveness, just increase the scale, e.g. 0–2. Score Voting in any variation produces the best results of any voting method.

## Approval Voting is a simple solution with HUGE BENEFITS

1. **Candidate diversity:** Lesser-known, under-funded candidates do not risk being spoilers, like Ralph Nader in 2000
2. **Less negative campaigning:** Similar candidates do not fight over votes from the same constituency
3. **Turnout:** With more choices and less negativity, voters will be more engaged and inclined to vote
4. **No wasted-vote dilemma:** Voters can vote both their heads and their hearts, never abandoning their favorite candidate
5. **No vote splitting:** Consensus winners with max approval and broad appeal, not polarizers or even near-random winners
6. **Visibility:** Candidates' results reflect their true support

**2000** US Presidential Election: Florida Vote

Bush 48.85%

Buchanan 0.29%

Browne 0.28%

Nader 1.64% **Spoiler!**

Gore 48.84%
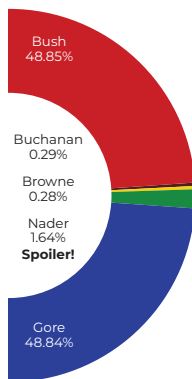
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