

Red vs. Blue: Who Wins in Your State and What Does It Mean?

Today, Republicans are typically represented by the color red and Democrats are generally blue. Prior to 2000, however, the colors were reversed to reflect European designations of red for liberal and blue for conservative parties.

The election of 2000 officially created the red state conservatives and blue state democrats when a journalist used the colors on a map depicting the leaders of each state. The color scheme took root and we now use the terms "red state" and "blue state" to mean conservative and liberal states respectively.

Obviously, not every person in a red state votes Republican. So, why the blanket effect? This is due to our country's "winner take all" electoral process. Majority rules, essentially. In US Presidential elections, whoever get the most individual votes, gets all of the electoral votes.

Purple states are used during elections to designate swing states, or states that are so close, they may go either way.

The red state/blue state system has seemingly aided in the polarization of political views in each state. The idea that you must choose a side has had adverse effects on the people of each state, creating feelings of hostility between the two sides. The rise of "purple states" is working to alleviate those tensions.

The red state/blue state maps are typically used by journalists and exploited by the American media to divide political beliefs.

International reaction to the red state/blue state system is confused. As we stated, the European political system generally uses blue for conservative representation and red for liberal parties.

The UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, and France all use the European system. However, the American system has become a permanent political representation for the US, that news networks in these countries now use our color-coding when covering the US's elections.