

# Partisanship Patterns In Aiken County and SC: Republican Dominance and Underlying Shifts (the storm below the calm?)

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# Central Importance of Parties

- Founders hated – Federalist #10
- But essential, even though often fail
- Play many functions
  - Simplify voting
  - Screen/Recruit candidates—major failure in recent years
  - Recruit new voters
  - Outlet for discontent
  - Can help checked and balanced government to get moving
- Why two parties?
- Today the greatest line of division in nation—See Pew study

# Lines of Partisan Division in Aiken Co.—2016

Issue	Democrat	indepndt	Republican
Oppose gay marriage	21%	22%	57%
People too lazy to work	17%	25%	42%
Keep Confed Flag up	7%	36%	63%
Free trade agreements bad	17%	44%	52%
Abortion: Women free to choose	66%	45%	16%
No path to stay for undocumented immigrnt	16%	34%	59%
Increase taxes on the wealthy	60%	50%	32%
Repeal the ACA	4%	46%	81%
Global warming real/must be dealt with (2000)	78%	64%	43%
Support assault weapons ban (1996)	75%	62%	49%

# Measuring Partisan Identification

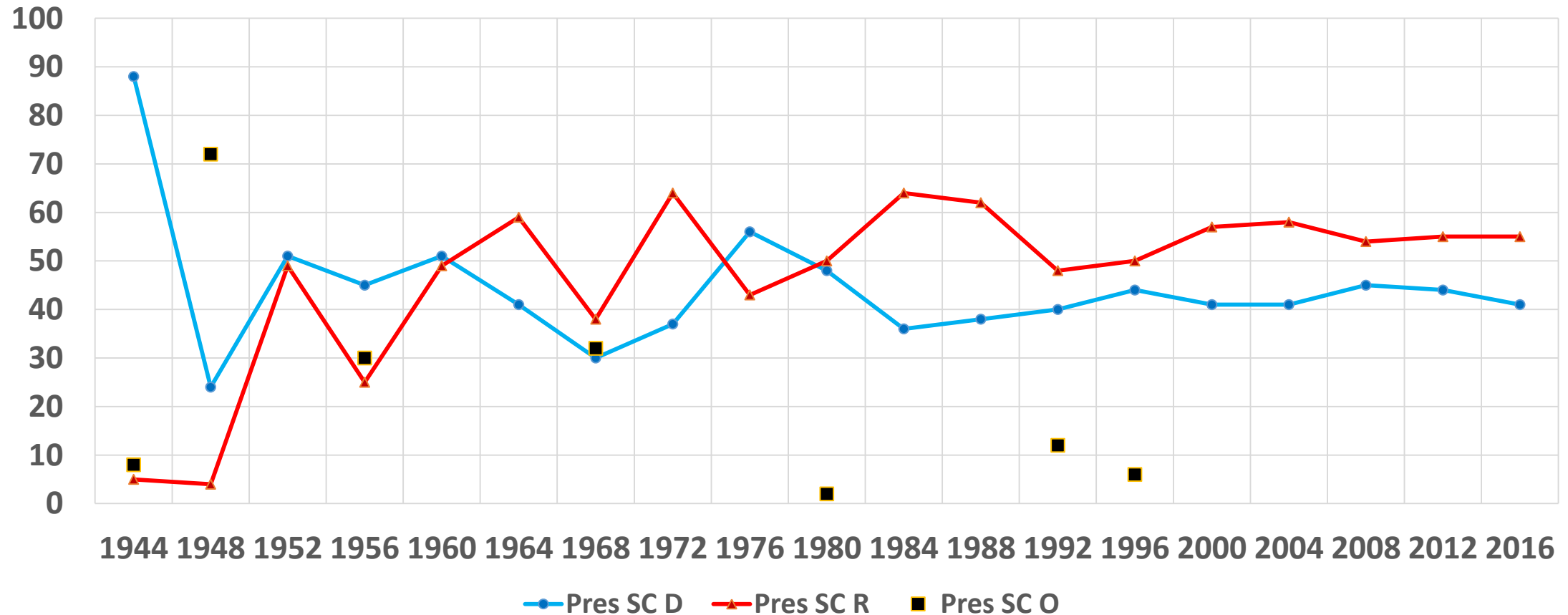
- Standard wording depends on type of survey
- Self-administered is most simple—Just a list of id’s to choose
- Telephone Survey Wording:

Do you generally consider yourself to be a **Democrat, Republican**, neither one, or what? [IF "DEMOCRAT" OR "REPUBLICAN" ASK:] Are you a strong or weak \_\_\_\_\_? [IF "NEITHER ONE" OR IF THEY USE THE TERM "INDEPENDENT" OR SAY THEY "VOTE THE PERSON" OR "ISSUES", ASK:] Do you lean to the Democrats or Republicans?
- Problem: What to do with the “Leaners?”



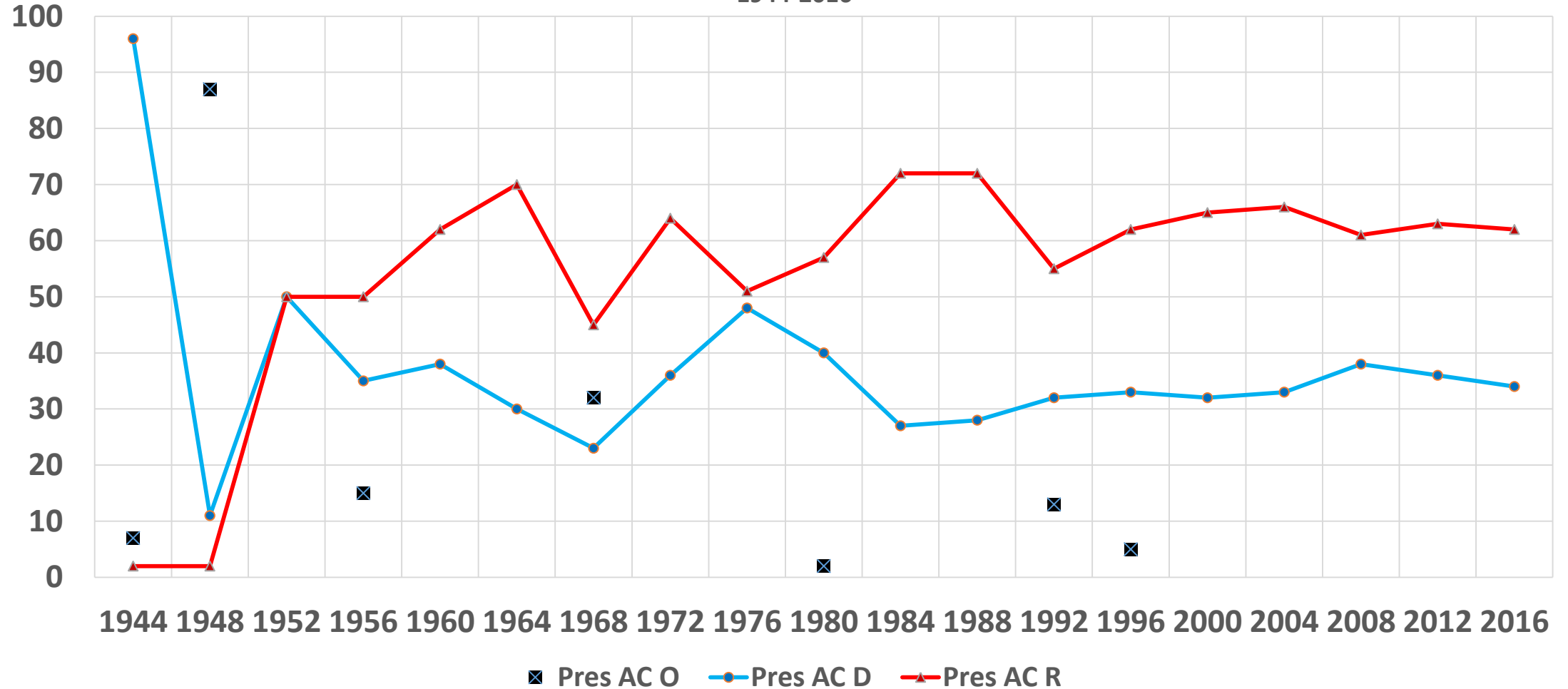
# Party in Aiken Co and SC Elections: 1944-2018, Presidential, Governor, and US Senate

Presidential Vote by Party in SC, 1944-2016



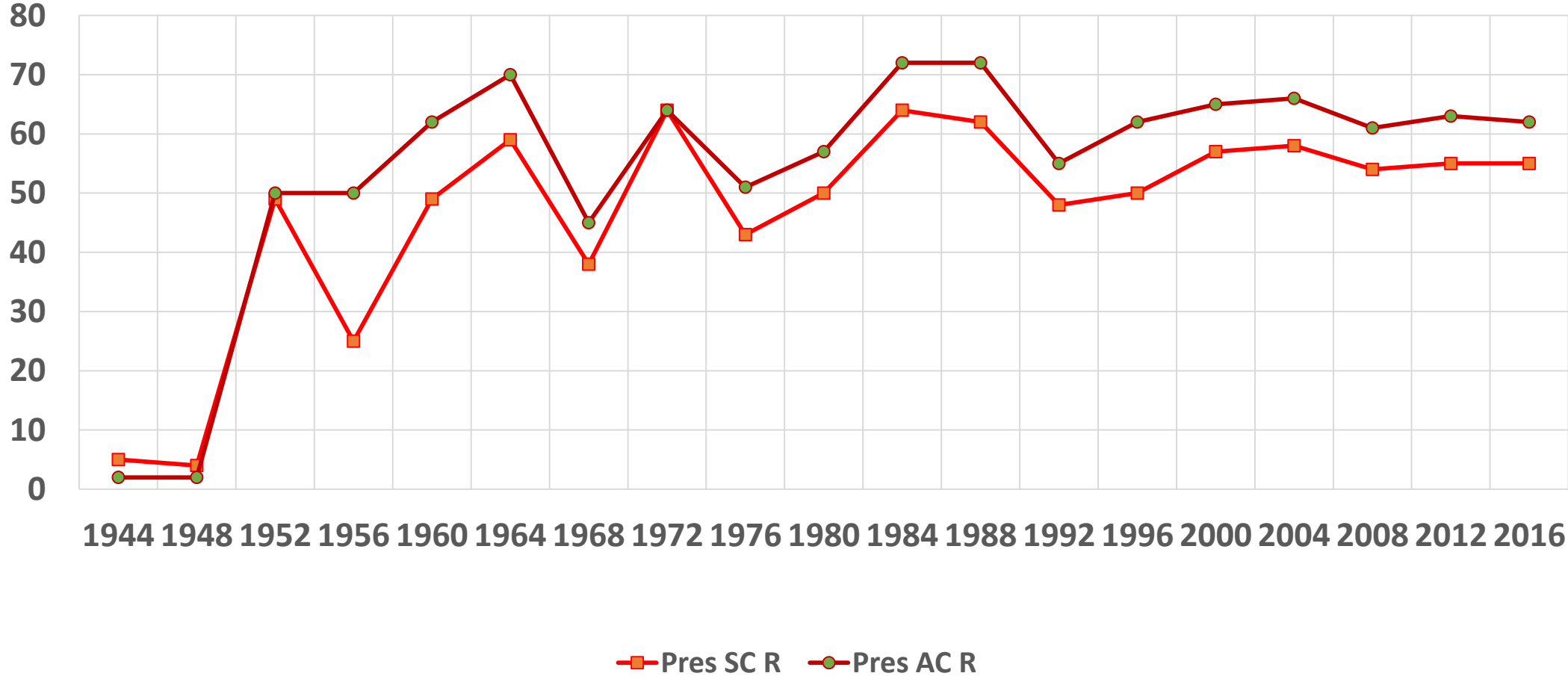
# Presidential Vote by Party In Aiken County

Presidential Vote by Party in Aiken County  
1944-2016



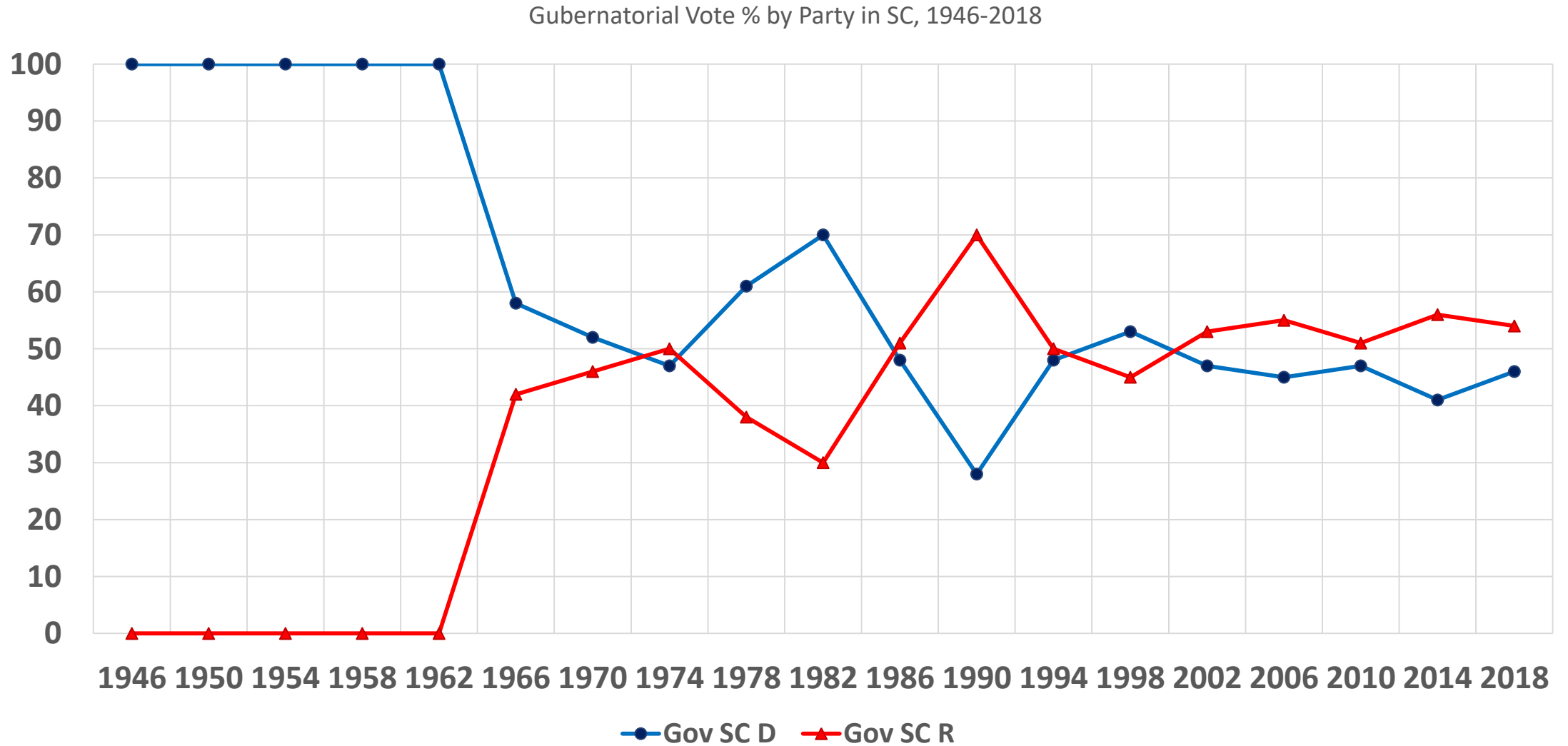
# Comparing Presidential GOP %, Aiken Co and SC

GOP % Vote in Presidential Elections in SC and AC



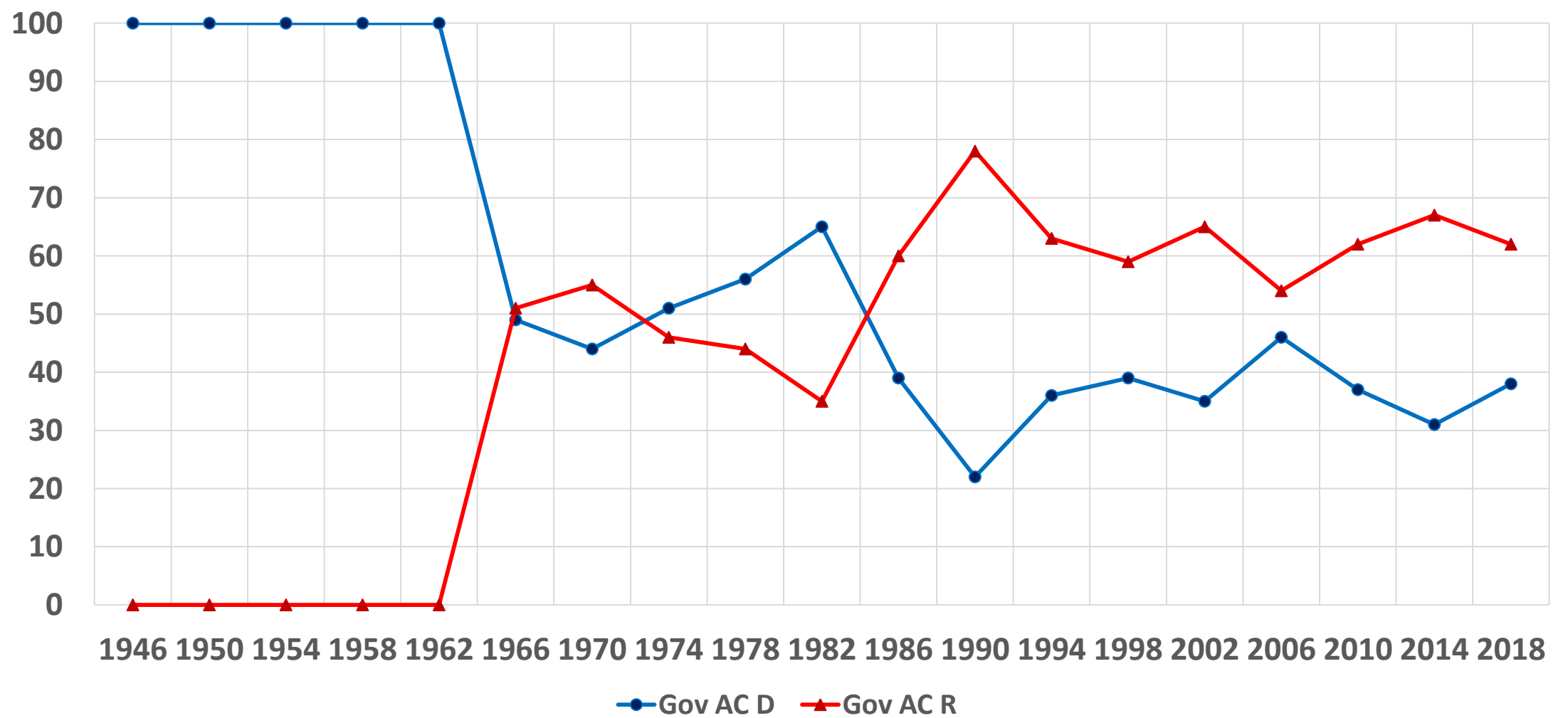


# Governor Vote % by Party in SC, 1946-2018



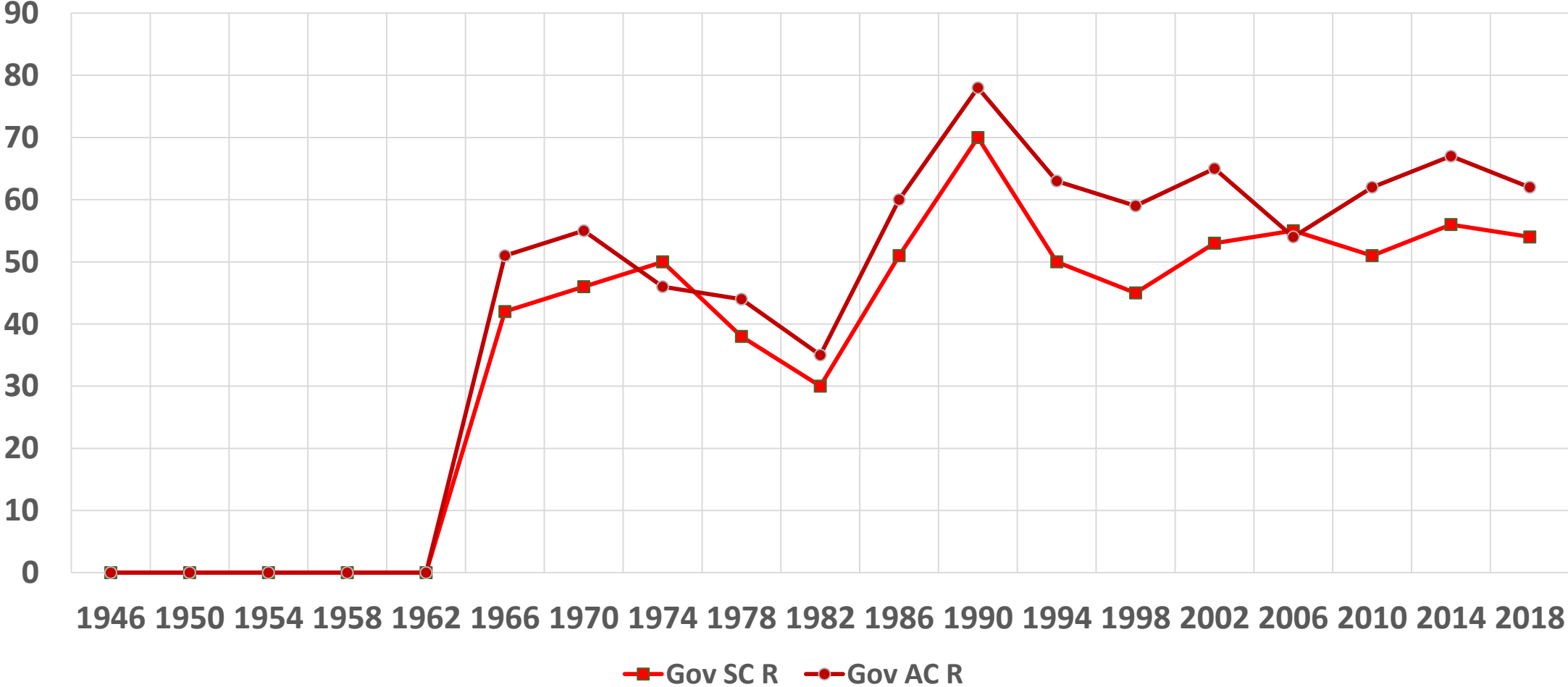
# Gov Vote % by Party in Aiken Co, 1946-2018

Gubernatorial Vote % by Party in Aiken County



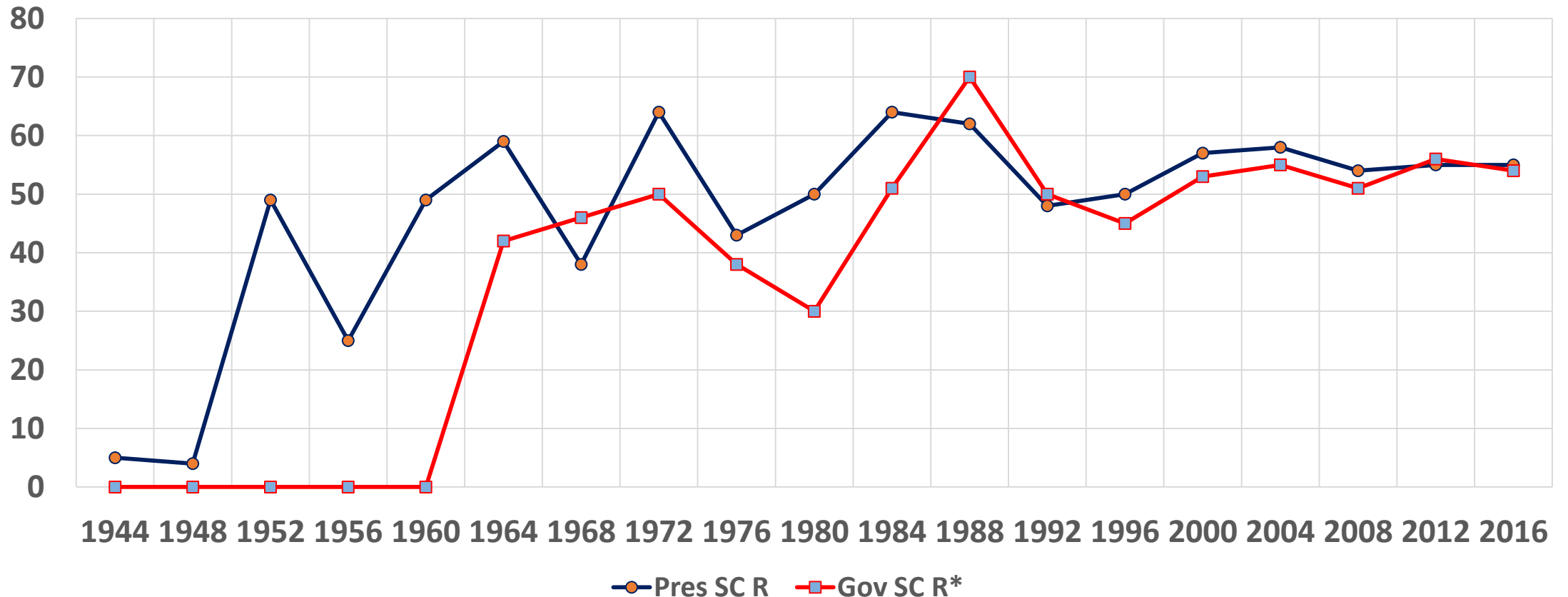
# Comparing Governor GOP %, Aiken Co and SC

GOP % Gubernatorial Vote in SC and AC



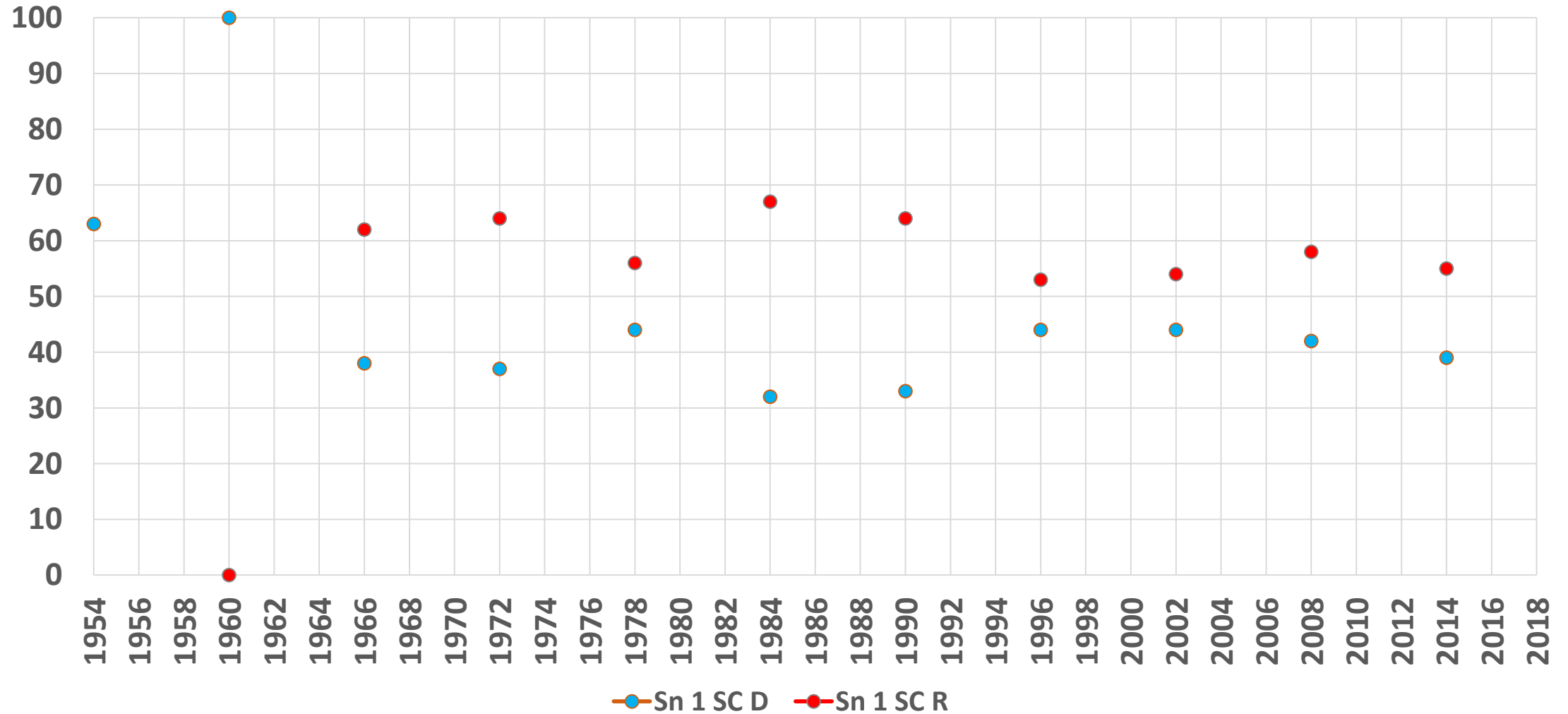
# SC Voters Move to GOP Faster in President than Governor Elections

GOP Voting % in Presidential and Governor Elections in SC (Gov Year is moved back by 2)



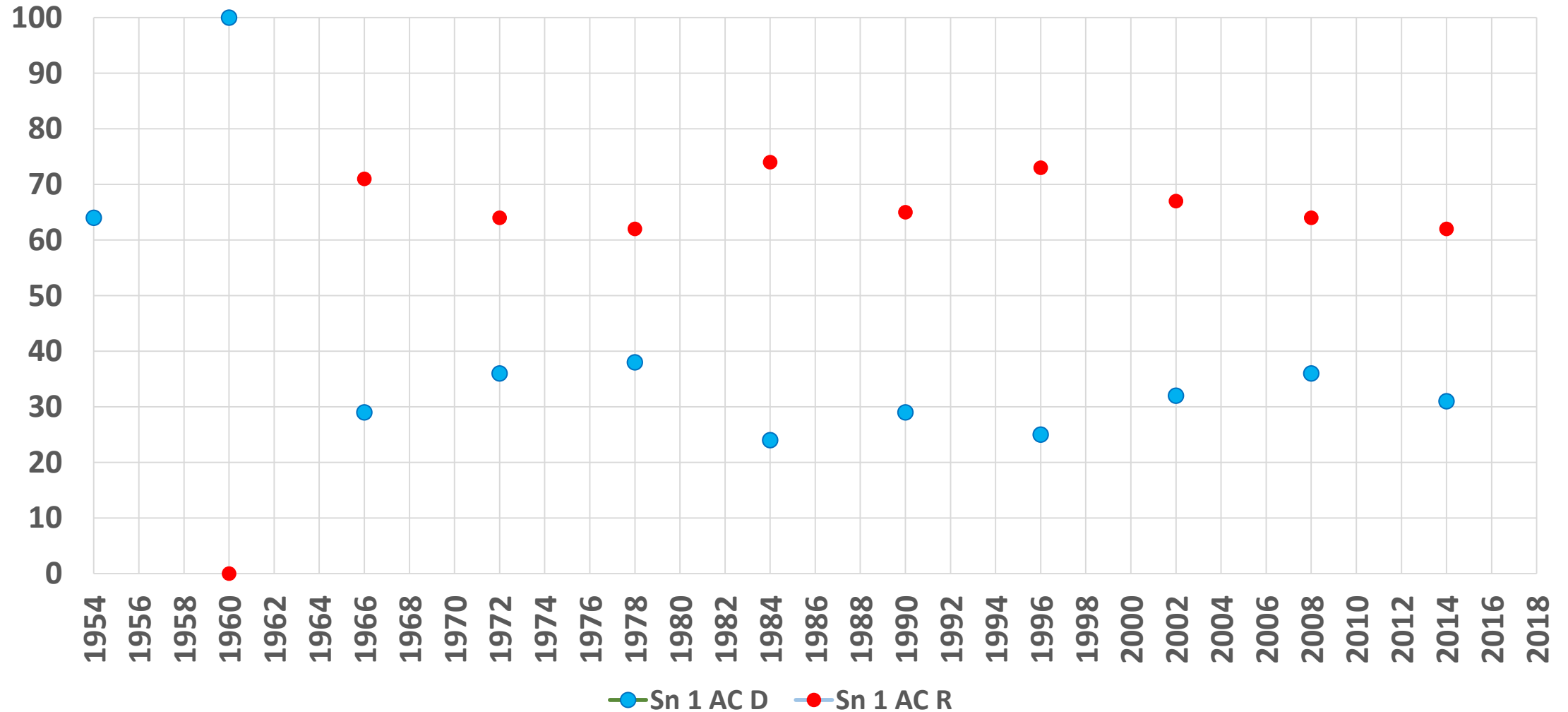
# US Senate Seat1 (Strom) Vote % by Party in SC

US Senate 1 Vote % by Party in SC



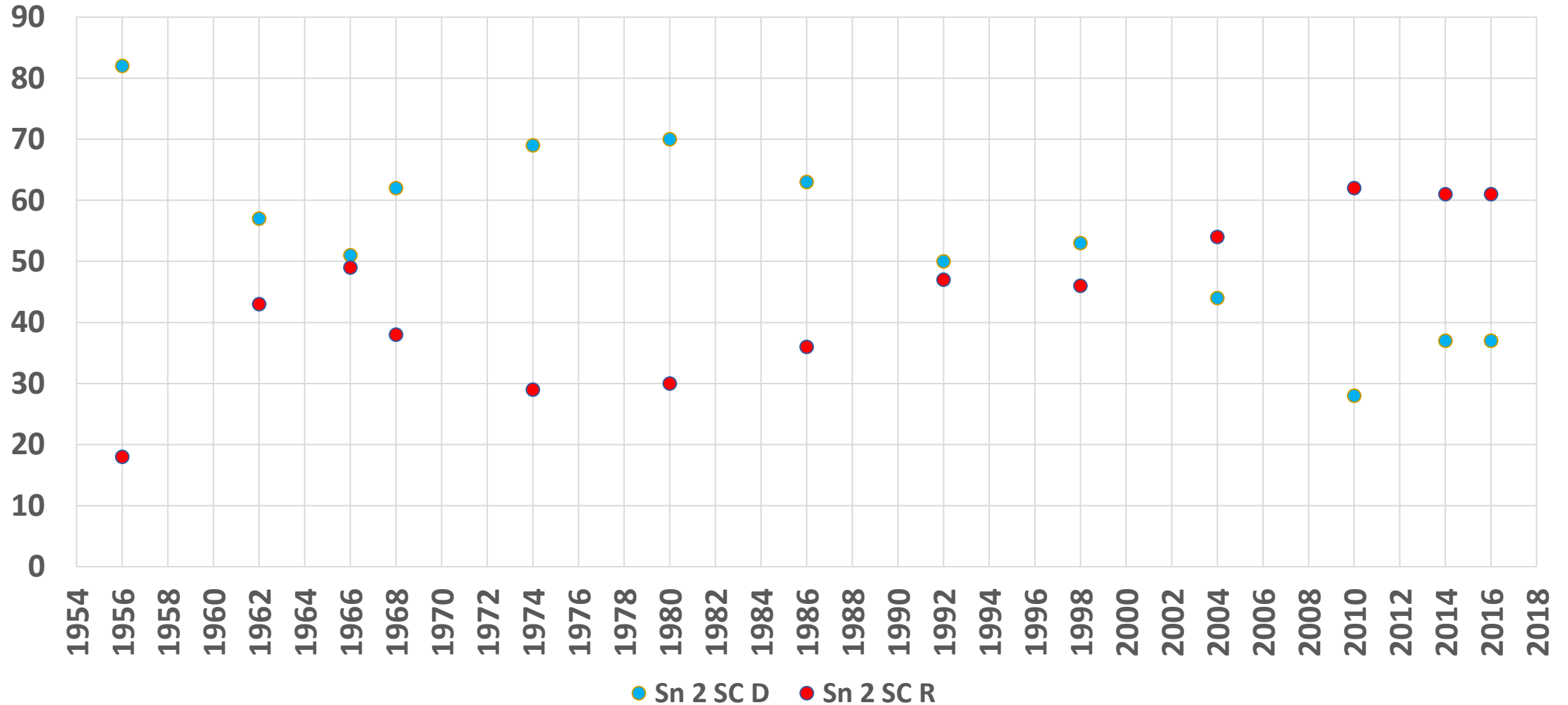
# US Senate Seat1 (Strom) Vote % by Party in AC

US Senate 1 Vote % by Party in Aiken County



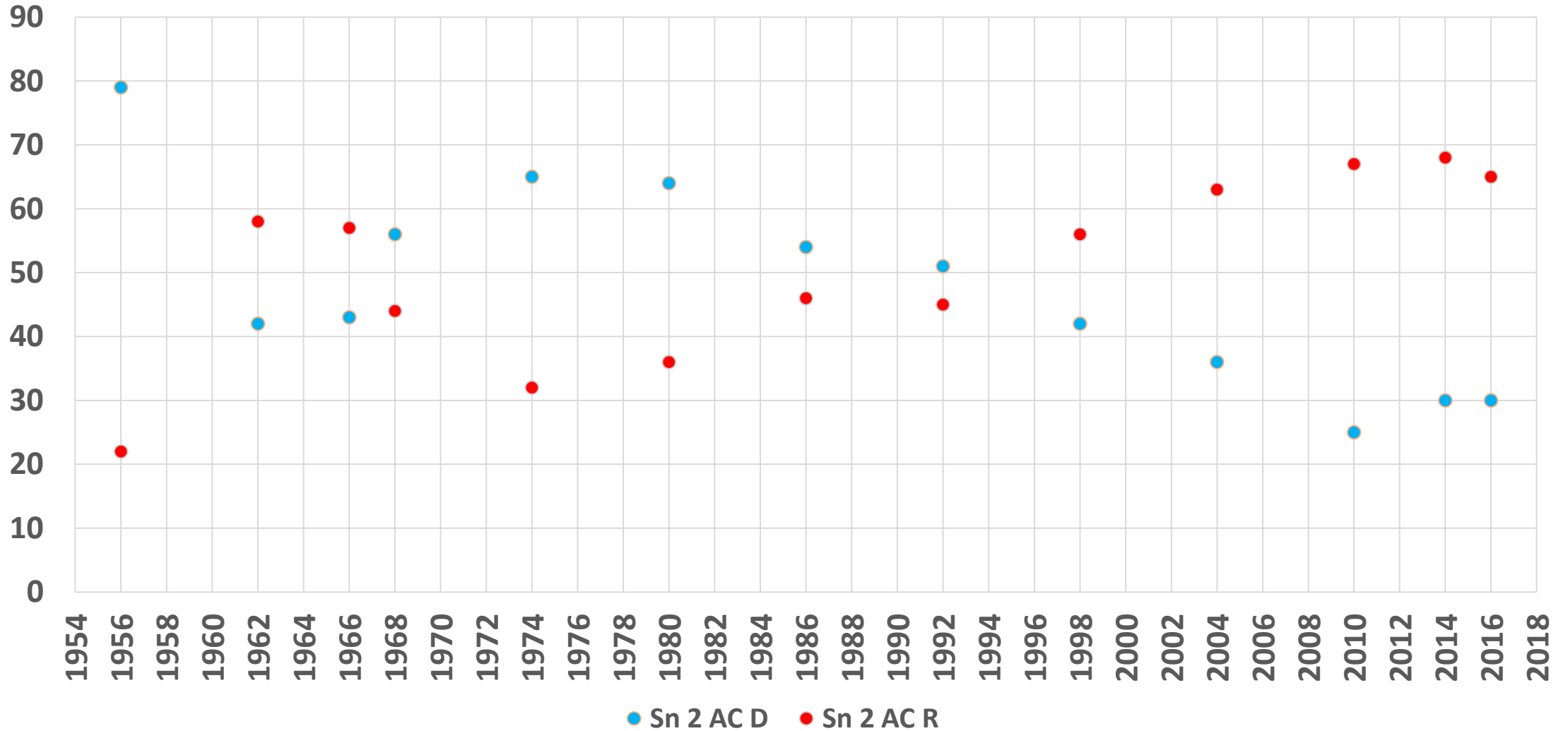
# US Senate Seat2 (Fritz) Vote % by Party in SC

US Senate 2 Vote % by Party in SC



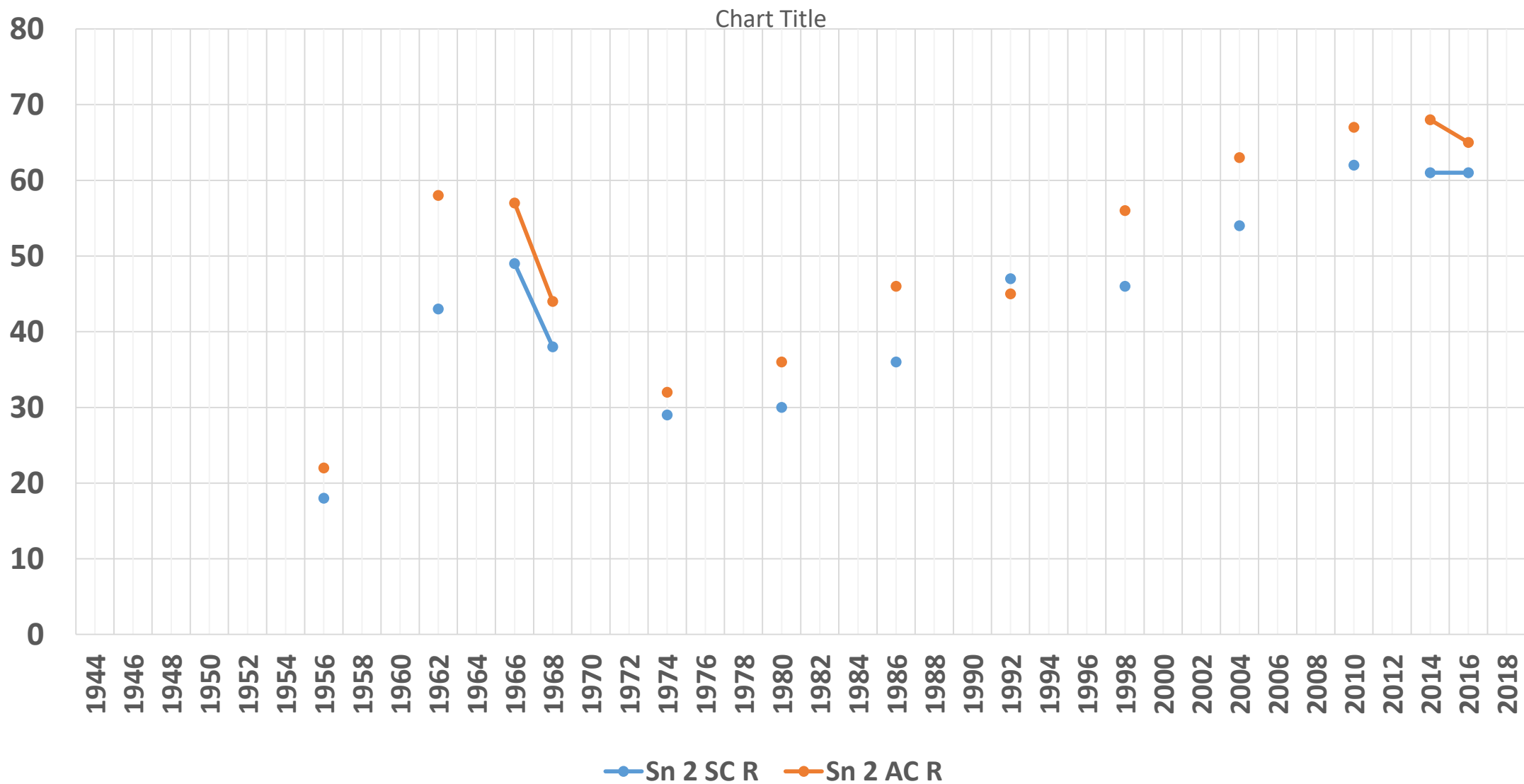
# US Senate Seat2 (Fritz) Vote % by Party in AC

US Senate 2 Vote % by Party in Aiken County





# Comparing Senate2 GOP %, Aiken Co and SC

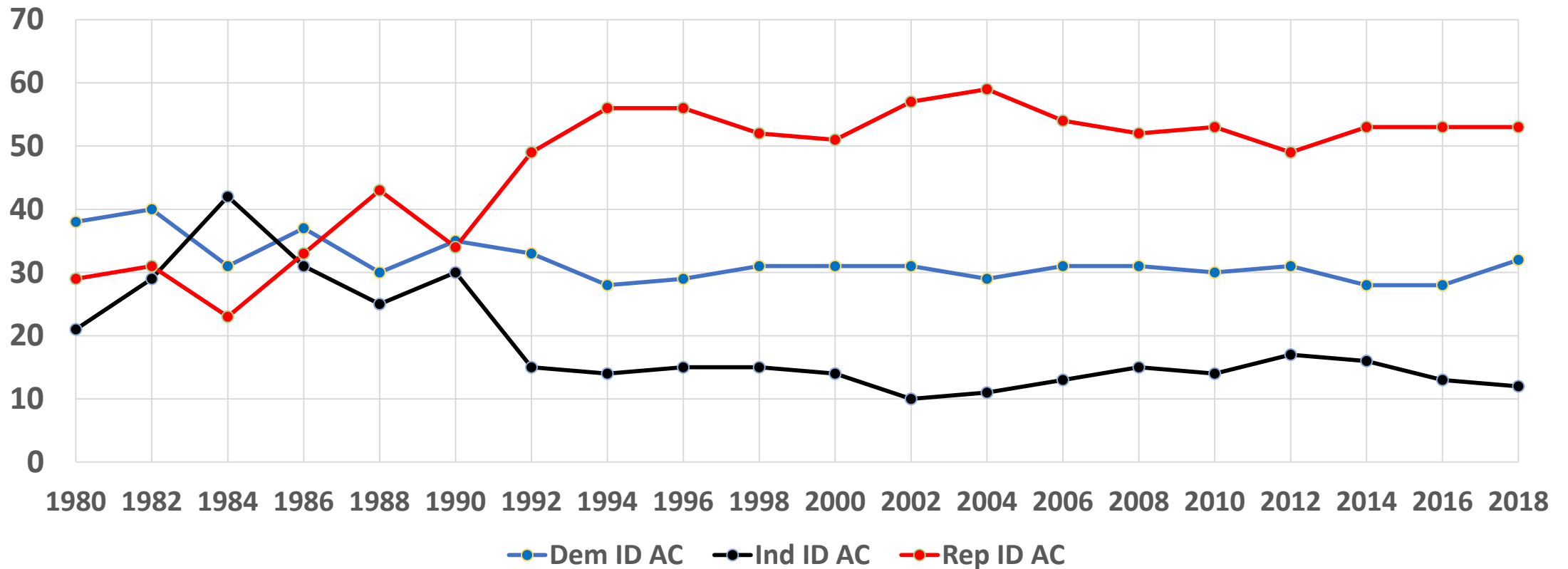


# Take-aways from Election Trends Graphs

- At presidential level:
  - Dem dominance ended in 1948; Dem competitiveness ended after 1980
- At Gubernatorial level:
  - Dem dominance ended in 1966; Dem competitiveness ended after 2002
- In Senate races, incumbency was more important than party
  - One senate seat flipped to solid GOP after Strom ran as Rep in 1966
  - Other stayed Democratic till Fritz retired in 2004, but he had relatively tight contests in his last two runs
- Top down GOP trend starting with Pres to Gov (and then lower)
- Aiken Co consistently more GOP than SC, by about 10 pts (winning in low to mid 60s vs low to mid 30s in nearly all elections by the 1990s)

# GOP Dominance in Party Id Since Early 1990s

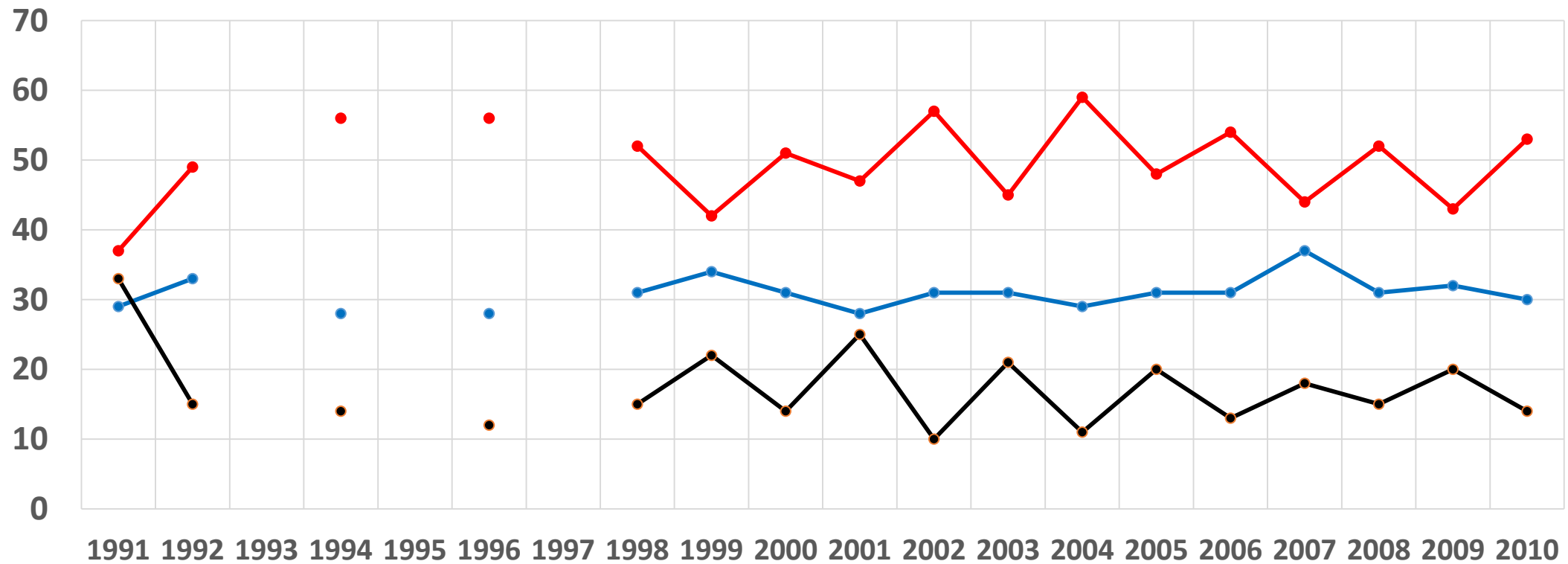
Voter Party Id in Aiken County, 1980-2018



# GOP Advantage Lower Among General Population

Partisan Divide: Population & Voters, 1991-2010

Dem indep Rep



Patterns in Party Group Composition and Group  
Partisan Division of Aiken County Voters in the  
1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2012, 2014, 2016 and  
2018 Elections Based on USC Aiken Exit Surveys

# Some Echoes of the Nation: Takeaways from Partisanship Patterns in Aiken County, 1992-2018

- Continued overall GOP domination, roughly a 5/3 advantage
- Gender: significant gap at about 5-10 points, but GOP still ahead
- Ethnicity:
  - 1) whites moved toward GOP, blacks remain solidly Dem
  - 2) Dems were majority white, but now majority black
- Ideology: more pure (loss of conservative Dems & liberal Republicans)
- Class: some movement of w/c to GOP, but among whites, Dems lose nearly all w/c voters to GOP
- Age: Dems gain among young (+14 points in 2018); GOP relies more on older voters, now almost a decade older than Dems
- White Educated Women: GOP advantage slips, though still ahead