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**Intro:** Welcome to the Let’s Talk Government Podcast. A podcast that is provided for you by the department of government at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Located in Minnesota in the United States. I am your host Dr. Pat Nelson, the chairperson of the department of criminal justice. I want to thank you for joining us as we explore different topics related to government. Some may be surprising and some may not, so please enjoy.

**Dr. Nelson:** Welcome to Episode 31 of the let's talk government podcast, Southern Politics and racial and ethnic politics. We do want to thank one of our listeners for sending in the suggestion to talk about the elections in Georgia last year that led to this podcast. I am joined by Dr. Kevin Parsneau and Dr. Fred Slocum from the political science program in the department of government at Minnesota State University, Mankato. So let's kind of start with a broader view of southern politics and racial and ethnic politics, and maybe even just talk about the process of elections and some of the southern states. I know we talked about majority and plural elections So Dr. Slocum do you want to kind of talk about the process there?

**Dr. Slocum:** Sure. Most states around the country use a plurality election system, so often called SMSP; Single Member of Simple Plurality, which means that-- and Minnesota is one of those states that uses that, and in that SMSP system the winner of the most votes is elected to a seat. End of story. So that was the case in the Minnesota governor's race, for example in 1998 when Jesse Ventura won the governor's race with only 37% of the vote and a three-candidate race. And most southern states use that system, however, Georgia, does not. Georgia has what's called a majority run off electoral system in which, whether for state or federal office, the candidate that wins the most votes is not guaranteed election unless that candidate also wins a majority of all the votes cast. So in Georgia what's required is a majority, rather than a plurality for winning the most votes, a majority is at least one vote more than 50% of all the votes cast. And if no candidate wins a majority in Georgia the race will be forced into a runoff between the two top finishers. And then the winner of that race with only two candidates in the race and the winner of that race will have a majority of the votes and is therefore elected. And that that is why Georgia had a two-stage election process in 2020 for the US Senate seats there. The Republican incumbent senators, David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, were the leaders in the about vote totals after the 2020 election, however they were both sort of a majority of all the votes cast and so they had to defend their seats in a runoff which was held on January 5th of this year. And to a lot of analysts’ surprise, including my own surprise, the Democratic challengers to them, Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, defeated the Republican incumbents and thereby claimed those Senate seats and the runoff elections that were necessitated by virtue of the Republican incumbents winning a plurality but short of a majority of all the votes cast in November.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well we're going to come back to the Georgia elections because it is really fascinating. So-- but before we do that Fred, is Georgia the only one that has the majority vote system in the southern region?

**Dr. Slocum:** No Louisiana does as well.

**Dr. Nelson:** Okay.

**Dr. Slocum:** To my knowledge they are the only states that do.

**Dr. Nelson:** So when we think about Southern politics we kind of have to come to mind of racial politics, you know, white and black and white voters and black voters. But is there more to that makeup in racial and ethnic politics in the south versus than just the white voters and black voters?

**Dr. Slocum:** There is to an increasing extent, particularly in the states along the Atlantic Seaboard. From Virginia down to Georgia, so Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia are, you know, all of them have substantial black populations. And they also are generally growing states, South Carolina a little bit less than the others, but they're generally growing at a faster clip than the rest of the South is. And furthermore the white voters in those states, with the exception of South Carolina tend to be a little bit less conservative, more willing to support Democrats in elections than in South Carolina and states further to the interior like Arkansas and Tennessee. Where generally speaking voter poll-- racial polarization and voting is less in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia than it is in the interior-- than in South Carolina and interior states of the South. The Mid South region like Arkansas Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Mississippi white voter-- white tendency to vote Republican is very, very high in those states but less so along the Atlantic Seaboard.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well before we start talking about some campaign strategies I'm going to turn to Dr. Parsneau. Have there been any changes in court rulings or laws about voter voting rights and district thing that would be impacting the different voting mechanisms in the south?

**Dr. Parsneau:** Well probably the biggest one was the decision and 2013 in the Shelby V. Holder.

When the Supreme Court weighed in there were provisions in the 1965 Voting Rights Act where states and local governments who had a history of segregation and discrimination against black voters had to, whenever they want to change their voting laws, they had to get preclearance from the Department of Justice and demonstrate that the laws they were passing wouldn't have a disparate effect. In other words wouldn't affect black voters more than white voters because they kind of establish that they had, you know, poll taxes, literacy tests, all these kinds of things that were designed to reduce the ability of African Americans to go out and vote. So there was this rule in place since 1964 and then later in the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And those were thrown out in 2013 as argued by the Chief Justice, John Roberts said, look it's been like 50 years, America has changed, it's unfair to make these counties and states continue to go through this practice. Famously Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a liberal member of the court who opposed the decision, argued that getting rid of these voting rights protections for African Americans in these places in the south was like throwing away your umbrella because you're not getting wet anymore. So she argued that they need to continue to be in place. That's probably the biggest change in that the Supreme Court invalidated part of the Voting Rights Act and said it's no longer necessary. And many people argue still that those protections are still necessary, there's still some tendency in some of these places to try to reduce voter turnout by African Americans.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well as we keep talking about ethnic politics. There is another case that just came up recently. I know Arizona is not considered a southern state but Dr. Parsneau would you be able to talk a little bit about the case of the Attorney General of Arizona versus the Democratic National Committee that just happened this last year and that impact on ethnic politics?

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah that wasn't a recent case it, almost carried off where the Shelby V. Holder decision came from in that there was a ruling where Arizona, like if somebody voted in the wrong precinct right, they may be in the right county or the right-- obviously the right state of Arizona but they voted in the wrong precinct, their whole ballot would be invalidated. Even though clearly if they're in Arizona, they should count them for governor, statewide offices, the presidential election. But the Secretary of State of Arizona said nope, you're entirely invalid. And a group of indigenous Americans I believe it was from the Navajo tribe, argued look given the way that their addresses among many Navajo, it's hard to know what precinct you're in, people sometimes go to different precincts, the wrong one. Also, noting that precincts in some of these areas where you vote gets changed a lot more than it does say in a rich suburb. And so they argued, having this rule is unfair right? Maybe the person voted for the wrong state legislator, but they voted in the governor's race, they vote in the presidential race, the board and wherever, you should at least count votes. Throw out the ones that they're voting in the wrong place that it affects but count the other ones and the Supreme Court in a 6-3 decision,

the 6 what we call conservative members of the court against the three liberal members of the court, said no the ruling was perfectly fair we're upholding that ruling and it does not matter that the law has a disparate effect between whites and minorities. It's still constitutional because they said we don't know that, that was the intent of the law. So that was a situation where the court weighed right in and I mean further got rid of the language of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and said even if it has a racial effect, if that's not the intent, you can do it. And I think a lot of people are concerned that further efforts to reduce minority vote and make it harder for minorities to vote or throw out ballots are sort of empowered by this decision by the Supreme Court. And the fact that it's 6-3 suggests that this might be the trend of the Supreme Court for quite some time because quite a few members of that 6 are not very old, they'll probably be on the court for another 30 years.

**Dr. Nelson:** So it's always interesting when you hear about what the supreme court does but we also know that there's some states that are passing more restrictive voting rights laws so. I'll turn it over to whoever wants to talk about how does those restrictions on voting rights laws and requirements impact voter turnout? And then how do you see that voter turnout changing in the southern states as related to like Georgia?

**Dr. Slocum:** Well there are the argument made by many civil rights activists is that more restrictive voting laws are-- have the effect of and are intended to disproportionately discourage voting among people of color. And past research has shown that, and past incidents have shown that, practices like moving polling places out of heavily minority neighborhoods or stationing election observers and polling places where those coming in to vote are predominantly people of color have that impact. There was a federal consent decree from New Jersey in 1982 I believe where, New Jersey Republicans were ordered-- were required to stop posting observers and polling places in heavily minority neighborhoods in places like Newark. So I mean there's a lot of concern among civil rights activists that the intent of more restrictive voting laws is to-- that the underlying intent is to crack down on minority voting and to engineer and electorate that has a higher percentage of white voters.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah I should point out here that in that Brnovich V. DNC case that I was just talking about, I don't remember which member of the Supreme Court asked the Republican Party-- the Republican Party of Arizona's lawyer who is there answering questions about the case, they asked him what was the interest of the Republican party in passing this law? And he argued that the law he said something along the lines of, it puts us at a competitive disadvantage to not have that law. So he openly expressed the idea that that would advantage his party as an argument that the courts inside with him.

**Dr. Nelson:** So-- Oh, go ahead friend.

**Dr. Slocum:** And along the lines of voter ID laws as well. You know voter ID laws. One voter ID law out of Indiana was upheld by the US Supreme Court in 2008. However, that doesn't uphold all voter ID laws. But in route to that, Supreme Court ruling that case was heard in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and a conservative federal judge who sat on that circuit court named Richard Posner, had ruled in favor of allowing the Indiana voter ID law to stand while on the court. But he later in one of his legal writings, he's a known legal scholar, reversed himself saying that the primary purpose of voter ID laws was to discourage or put a damper on minority voting. But as Kevin said the Supreme Court has required demonstration of intent to discriminate rather than simply disparate impact in terms of the impact of voting laws on people of color.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well and this seems to also empower the secretary of state because that becomes much more powerful position because they run, usually are the overseer of elections in each of the states. So it seems to give them a lot more power than most people even realize.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah instead of-- there is some concern that instead of having this under sort of the power of sort of objective, nonpartisan local officials that are just counting ballots right? Literally, like John Roberts describes, calling balls and stripes not trying to influence the outcome, taking it out of their hands and then putting it in the hands of officials that are partisan elected officials. Whether that would be Attorney General, Secretary of State, or putting it into the hands of the state legislature. That's one of the concerns that there's been changes in state laws that regardless of how the outcome comes, the state legislature can come in and say, well we're sending our presidential electors a different slate right? They can say, well we think somebody else one so we're sending in other than what the nonpartisan objective is. So there's a lot of concern that this is getting moved from just people kind of counting balance to allowing more partisan decisions over how ballots are counted. So in addition to reducing voting. I don't know if this is the best place to mention it, but there are a variety of other like sort of laws, I think Fred talked about a few of them, that are sort of in reaction to the large voter turnout of 2020. Different states have reduced the number of ballot boxes, particularly in areas where minorities live. They've reduced the timeframe people have for early voting. So like if you're absentee voting or just no excuse early voting, you want to send in by mail or drop it off instead of being there on election day, they shrunk the timeframe making it harder to do. Adding additional voter ID requirements and then of course there's the famous one in Georgia, where they said that outside groups would not be allowed. There’s sometimes these long lines to vote, particularly in places where African Americans vote, and that you would not be allowed to hand them food and water under the idea that people would hand them water trying to influence their vote. Well they're also standing outside for, you know, a couple of hours at a time. A person needs maybe a drink of water, right? So, that was really controversial and it's particularly controversial because some of these groups have a very popular way for African Americans to vote in a lot of these areas, its what's called souls to the polls. Whereas a church there tends to be sort of organizing for only the black churches to get people to go vote early, go vote together, go to drop boxes on a Sunday as opposed to like normal election day. And a lot of these laws are seen as ways to make it harder to do the souls to the polls.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well that's interesting. I've never heard of the souls to the polls. So let's talk about what are some of the different campaign strategies of the Democrats and Republicans in the southern politics?

**Dr. Slocum:** Hi. Yes, the strategies for the Democratic and Republican parties are very different in the South. The South has historically been home to a large amount of racial polarization in voting. So that kind of dictates different campaign strategies for the parties. For Democrats the primary strategy is twofold. First off to mobilize large numbers of votes of people of color, especially black people and African Americans especially, because their votes tend to go lopsided lead to Democrats. Typically 85 or more percent of black votes that are cast go to Democrats in southern races, sometimes over 90%. And meanwhile, however, Democrats have to be careful to avoid losing too much ground among white voters. In a state where racial polarization is very high like Mississippi, perhaps the most racially polarized state, the overall population is about 37%, black, mostly African American. The white population amounts to about 60% but no Democrat really has a snowball's chance in a very hot place in Mississippi because the white vote typically breaks 80 or more percent Republican. And so it doesn't matter how many votes Democrats can generate from the black community, they're bound to lose on a statewide basis. On the other hand in a state like North Carolina, the white vote does not break so lopsidedly Republican as in Mississippi. And in North Carolina a candidate can win with a biracial or multiracial—a Democratic candidate, can win with a biracial or multiracial strategy by mobilizing the black vote and to a lesser extent the Latino or Asian vote which also tends to lean Democratic, while still winning a respectable share of the white vote. If, generally speaking, if the Democrats can get 40% or more of the white vote they are doing well. If the Democrats are held to 25% or less of the white vote they are likely to lose. For Republicans, the reverse is true. Republicans want to run up large white majorities or large majorities among the white vote and in the process they typically ignore and often seek to actively suppress the black vote or votes of people of color. So for the Republicans the road to victory is the role of white majorities. For Democrats the route to victory is the rule of biracial and multiracial coalitions.

**Dr. Nelson:** So you definitely have like a scientific method to figuring out what would be a majority and what would lean one way or the other. So what does your research tell you about how to increase that voter turnout? How could the parties increase that voter turnout, what can they do?

**Dr. Parsneau:** Well there's been a lot of political science, obviously political scientists are interested in what causes people to vote or not. And one of the things that, there's two researchers, Gerber and Green, who started this research. They've been doing it for a while but they really took off in the early 2000s-- late 1990s and early 2000s, where they wanted to see like this mail affect, people sending the mail, phone calling them, canvassing door to door and what actually does the best job dollar for dollar of turning people out. And what they found was it's really difficult to have much effect with mail or even phone calls. Not to say that those are completely worthless. And granted, these are political scientists so they can't so their message has to be something along the lines of, be a good citizen and go vote. As opposed to, go vote for Bob Smith, he's going to lower your taxes or he's going to save the environment or whatever. There's no-- it's difficult as political scientists to exactly replicate it. But still most of the findings were that going door to door was the main way to influence people and get them to actually vote. That was the one way to demonstrate statistically significant increases in votes. A lot of the follow up research in the past two decades on this has really focused on the importance for candidates and parties to have a personal relationship with the voter. Obviously if you're running for Senate you can't know every voter. But having somebody who actually talks to them in person and lets them vent frustration or ask them why wouldn't you vote for my candidate? Something that gives a personal connection, dramatically increases the likelihood that somebody who wasn't going to vote, will vote. And another thing that's been found in research is just doing this one time is not quite enough. If I show up as a candidate, and believe me I'm not ever running for office, if I was to show up as a candidate and say, hey will you vote for me in November? And then I disappear until 2 or 4 years later, 6 years later, to ask for your vote again, people will say, where were you? You've got my vote but you didn't want to talk to me otherwise. So there really is like building a relationship with voters in a sense that you're there for them. Gerber and green and a lot of other political scientists have found that it's this relational thing that's super important. Even more important than necessarily agreeing with people on the issues. Like if people really strongly-- if it's the issues that matter to them you're not going to persuade them to change their mind on issues. But you can persuade them that you're a good person who are listening.

**Dr. Nelson:** We’re going to come back to Georgia in just a moment but I'd like to just spend a minute or two talking about the current governor race in Virginia. It's really tight between the Democratic candidate and the Republican candidate. And what do you guys see? Is that going to be an influential race, does it tell us anything about what to expect in the upcoming year or two?

**Dr. Slocum:** That's hard to say although it's commonly perceived as a bellwether. Virginia has off year elections cycle for statewide elections and so there's often a tendency among those analyzing or absorbing politics to view that as a bellwether. I think it's-- to the extent that elections are nationalized I think it can, is more likely to be a bellwether of what can occur in 2022. However, every state is different. Virginia’s politics are commonly subdivided between northern Virginia and the rest of the state. That division is a little bit simplistic but northern Virginia is where Democrats draw most of their support due to the large populations of residents with more education, including many federal government employees in places like Arlington and Ruston and the other suburbs and excerpts of the Washington DC area. Republicans tend to draw their support from southern and western Virginia, especially the rural parts of the states in places like Danville in the south and the mountain regions in the West like Lynchburg. And then the suburbs are you know of Richmond and Norfolk are real battlegrounds between the two parties in most elections, so. But generally, Virginia was once kind of a lock for Republicans and presidential and most statewide races into the 90s and now the state is much more closely divided. However, the Democrats have won 4 out of the last 5 Governor's races and have won most of the statewide executive offices since 2001 which shows a shift. And generally the growing parts of the state has been in the northern parts near Washington DC where the Democrats tend to run strongest. And the more rural areas of the state aren’t steady in and population are shrinking. And so the overall demographic trends with the diversification in the north and the large number of federal workers and highly educated professionals tend to vote well for Democrats over the long term in the state.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah, and I think I mean, there's another issue here besides the fact that just generally speaking, if you just had a generic Republican and generic Democrat running in Virginia, 10 years ago you would have thought that the Republican would probably win. Now you think that just probably a slight margin for the Democrat. And Terry McAuliffe, who's running as the Democrat, has already been governor once so he's got good name recognition. I don't know exactly how Virginia has perceived his time as governor but you know he's got good name recognition and they nominated again. I think the Republicans when they nominated Youngkin, they probably were shooting for somebody who's more of a moderate, which is in a way, recognizing that Virginia is shifting. You can argue whether Youngkin is a moderate or not. He certainly tried to distance himself from Donald Trump, while some other Virginia Republicans sort of embrace Donald Trump. So there is a level where maybe this isn't so much even about national trends as just, is Donald Trump still an influential aspect? Is it going to turn out-- is he going to turn out Republican voters in Virginia? Right now, McAuliffe has a pretty consistent 3- or 4-point lead in the polls. But it's off your election so you know everybody's got to turn out their people that I'm pretty sure the Democrats are trying to say, here's just another Trump. You know if you're a Democrat you better get to the polls. While the Republicans have got kind of a mixed message of, no, no he's not Trump, he's in good moderate or just kind of conservative guy that you want to vote for, but still pull in those Virginia Trump voters. I kind of agree with Fred, I don't know that this is going to be a great measure of national trends. Because Virginia-- I mean one thing we find in political science, the south is different from the northeast, is different from the Midwest, is different from the west and so forth, but almost every state is really different from other states and everybody seems to know that for their own state. But they don't seem to realize like, you know as a Montanan and I would have said, Minnesota, Wisconsin, what's the difference? They're both a bunch of corn and flat, right? But now that I've lived here I realized how different Minnesota is from Wisconsin. And Minnesota is definitely-- like the Twin Cities is different from southern Minnesota, is different from the Iron Range, we know that here. It's the same thing in every state you go to. And so, I don't know how much-- Virginia gets attention because it's like the only movie playing in the theater so we minds well go watch it.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah, New Jersey too but New Jersey is not getting a lot of it. It has the governor's race too this fall but New Jersey's race is not really up for grabs the way Virginias is right now.

**Dr. Nelson:** So this is a good segue to come back to Georgia for kind of your final ideas and thoughts. So we had the runoff. So between the November 2020 elections and the runoff in January 2021. You had voices talking about invalidating the elections, you have rumors of Trump calling the Secretary of State in Georgia to influence how they were going to call the vote and do the runoffs, you have Stacey Abrams that's a big advocate in Georgia who they claim they helped get Biden elected. How does this all come together and why did we pay so much attention to the Georgia run off votes and elections for the Senate seats?

**Dr. Slocum:** Well, because first and foremost because those Georgia races on January 5th, the runoff races, decided they make up of the Senate and it was the case that Democrats had to win both of those seats in order to gain a marginal majority in the Senate with their holding the vice presidency to break tie votes. Had Republicans won either of those two Senate races in Georgia, Mitch McConnell would again be senate majority leader and Biden's agenda probably would be dead in the water. And so it was consequential that Democrats won both of those races lifting them to 50 votes in the senate and with Vice President Kamala Harris able to break ties, Democrats gained a nominal majority in the chamber. So it helps them unify Democratic control in Congress albeit by very narrow margin in both chambers.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Yeah. Fred is entirely right about the immediate effect of that. The difference between the Biden administration, as much as people are talking right now about Joe Manchin and Kristen cinema, that would be irrelevant to Democrats for passing Joe Biden’s policies if either of those two seats in Georgia had gone differently. So I think in the short term, to the extent that 2 or 4 years is the short term is that, but in the long term I think there's a big idea that like, wow, Georgia two Democratic senators. That something had changed in the south right because we have these maps of the US elections and they almost all look the same from Clinton on through to 2016. In 2016 there's a change which winds up with Trump winning. Now you see Georgia that's been consistently Republican, going for Biden at the presidential level and two Democratic senators and people say, is this new politics? Are we moving into a new era? And before that you mentioned Stacy Abrams. A lot of this has been credited to her and I think, fair enough. She lost 2018 gubernatorial election. To make a short story of it, she was running against Bryan Kemp, who at the time was the secretary of state of Georgia and a lot of sway over who gets to vote, who doesn’t. And he was really strict about some voting laws and throughout, something like 700,000 registrations saying, oh we're cleaning up the voting laws, voting roles. And it turns out that those were disproportionately African Americans. Stacy Abrams is African American and she's a Democrat. So, when she lost by like 50,000 votes people said Kemp used his power of Secretary of State to take the election away from her. She did concede right. So said I concede but what I'm going to do is work on voter turnout. And so a lot of other places are saying-- a lot of other places that want to see I voter turnout whether you're Republicans or Democrats, kind of looked at that and said well how did that happen? How did she increase voter turnout? And if you look at voter turnout for Georgia, Georgia ran consistently behind national averages. It's like a lot of southern states with low voter turnout. Especially if you go back to the, you know, 80s 90s, but as we got closer to the 2000s, they start getting closer and closer to the national average. And then in both 2018 and 2020 they actually exceeded. Now Minnesotans we in this state, in Minnesota always exceeds the national average. But to have a southern state do that is quite a thing. And the fact that it happened when Stacy Abrams was running for governor and then when she did her big push afterwards to increase voter turnout is sort of this idea that her work is, her work worked and that might be a key. I don't know that you can replicate that everywhere. Part of what you have in Georgia is a change in demographics. Increasing proportion of the population is African American, including a lot of African Americans are moving into Georgia. So, that was a group that she can reach out to. You don't necessarily have that in every single state. And then just different regions of Georgia are more diverse. So the diversity gives her group a population that may not have as high voter turnout rates that she can actually target. So like if somebody was to try to do something like this in Minnesota it's a bit tougher because there's not as many groups, there's not like an automatic group. Like sure, college students don't vote in as high a number, but Minnesota college students vote in pretty high numbers. So you don't have a sort of automatic pool to go to, to boost up their voting rates and turn people out. Anyway, sorry that was that was me sidetracked into that issue.

**Dr. Slocum:** I think my phone's about to run out of power but quickly, Georgia I think is a model for mobilizing people of color to vote. Stacey Abrams came unexpectedly close, although falling short in the governor's race in 2018 in Georgia and then decided to make a continuing project of voter mobilization and especially African American voter mobilization. But Abrams's project also include-- reflected the reality that Georgia also was seeing increased shares of Asian Americans and Hispanics in the state electorate. And that most of those more diverse populations are in the greater Atlanta area. And what's striking about Georgia politics is how in the 80s and 90s, the suburban counties of Atlanta were solidly conservative and very heavily white and that is no longer the case. In counties like Cobb and Dekalb, Gwinnett counties much more diverse populations, somewhat more socio economically diverse as well and the

Democrats have expanded their urban base in the Atlanta area to now incorporate, strengthen much of the suburbs in order to offset the Republican’s strength in the rural areas of the state.

**Dr. Nelson:** Well that's a perfect segue into wrapping up with Fred's phone getting ready to die. But thank you Kevin and Fred I love talking with you guys about this. I always learn something new and it's interesting how influential the southern politics can be on the entire United States.

**Dr. Parsneau:** I think—oh, sorry.

**Dr. Nelson:** No, go ahead.

Dr: Slocum: I have a little bit of battery power left, I have 10%. So I could field and other question.

**Dr. Parsneau:** I was just going to add one more thing before we go. A lot of what we've talked about, we've been talking about voting and turnout patterns between Republicans and Democrats. I think it's only fair to point out that if we go back in time just a couple of decades, you would have seen that it was Democrats-- a lot of the Democrats were segregating this. A lot of these things that came from the Voting Rights Act they were partisan because it was the Democrats. So this isn't necessarily Democrats have always been good and Republicans have always been bad. Its more complicated than that.

**Dr. Slocum:** It is.

**Dr. Parsneau:** Right now in Georgia, it's one way but it didn't necessarily have to be.

**Dr. Slocum:** Historically, it was Southern Democrats who opposed civil rights laws at the federal level in the 60s but northern Democrat strongly favored them and in coalition with northern Republicans. So I mean in terms of passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 so that was a bipartisan northern coalition that ushered those, that secured passage of those civil rights laws in Congress. But what's happened since the 1960s is that the once numerous contingents of Southern Democrats has struggled greatly and most Southern Democrats-- most seats that were once held by southern Democrats are now white Southern Democrats and therefore white conservative southern Democrats in the 60s and before. Majority of those seats are now held by white conservative Republicans on the one hand or in the case of concentrated black majority districts, black Democrats who generally are liberal in their voting behavior on the other. And you know that's another topic beyond this podcast but the drawing of majority minority districts has concentrated black voters in ways that allow black members of Congress to be elected and almost all those members are Democrats and represent pretty safe districts. But there has been a polarization by both race and party in southern congressional delegations. But in terms of numbers that is working Republican’s favor as many of the old southern Democratic seats are now held by white conservative Republicans throughout the region. In some states like Arkansas, there are no Democrats and no people of color in the congressional delegation. In other states like Mississippi there is 1 black Democrat but 3 white Republicans in the delegation. In Alabama there's one black Democrat and 6 white Republicans in the congressional delegation. So you do see a market polarization both based on race and party combined.

**Dr. Nelson:** That's amazing. Absolutely.

**Dr. Parsneau:** how many cans of worms can you open up in the last 5 minutes.

**Dr. Nelson:** Yeah well that’s definitely a topic we can talk about in the future but we kind of got to wrap it up with time here. But thank you gentlemen for coming and talking about this and we might have to pursue that can of worms that Fred just opened up in our last minute of the podcast. Thanks for joining me today.

**Dr. Slocum:** And thank you for hosting us Pat.

**[music]**

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