



COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, POLITICS, AND POLARIZATION

Matthew C. Nowlin, Ph.D.

Director, MPA Program

Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science

Restoring nature to its natural state is a cause beyond party and beyond factions. It has become a common cause of all the people of this country ... Clean air, clean water, open spaces-these should once again be the birthright of every American. If we act now, they can be

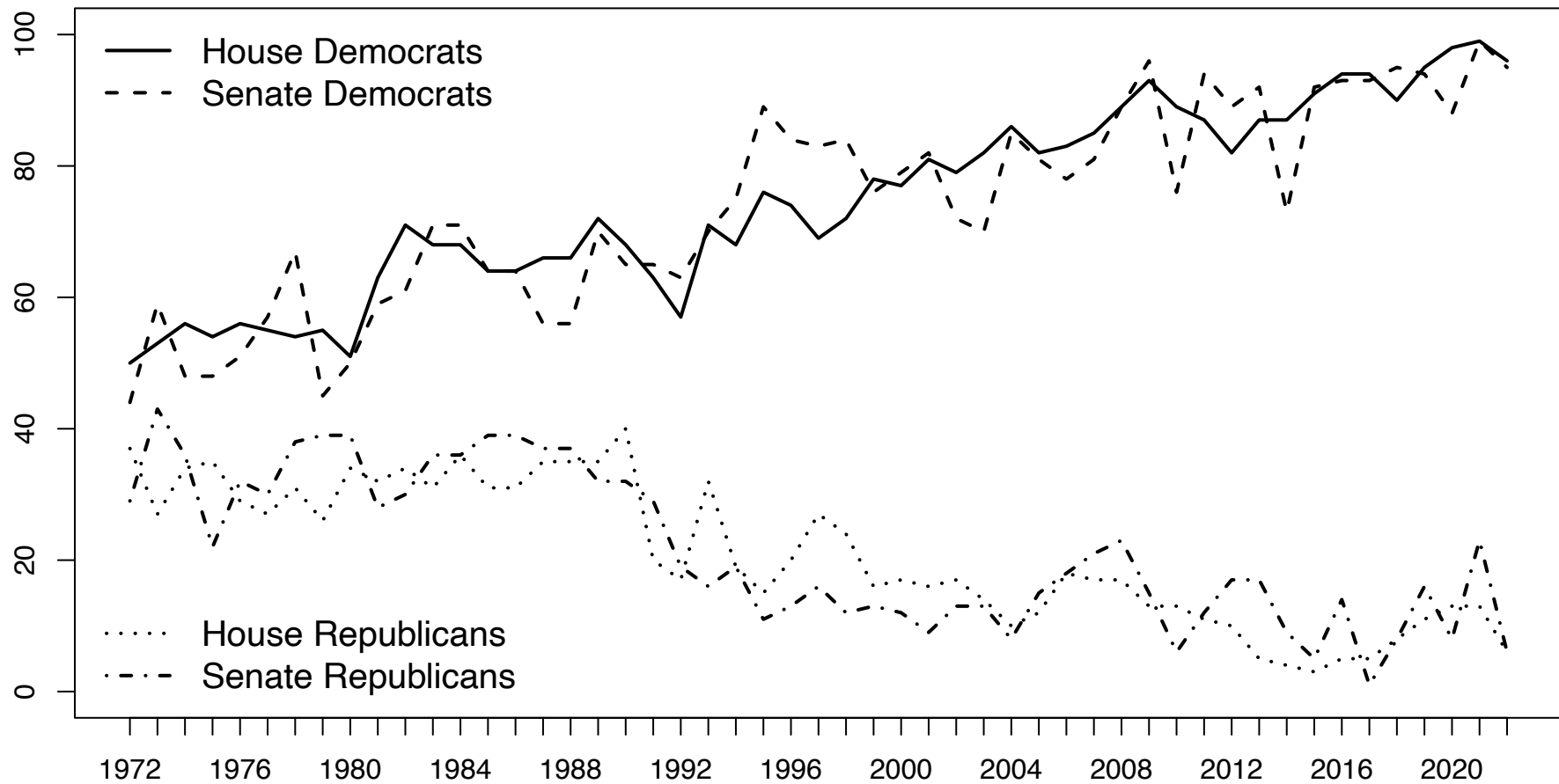
Restoring nature to its natural state is a cause beyond party and beyond factions. It has become a common cause of all the people of this country ... Clean air, clean water, open spaces-these should once again be the birthright of every American. If we act now, they can be

- President Richard Nixon, 1970 State of the Union Address

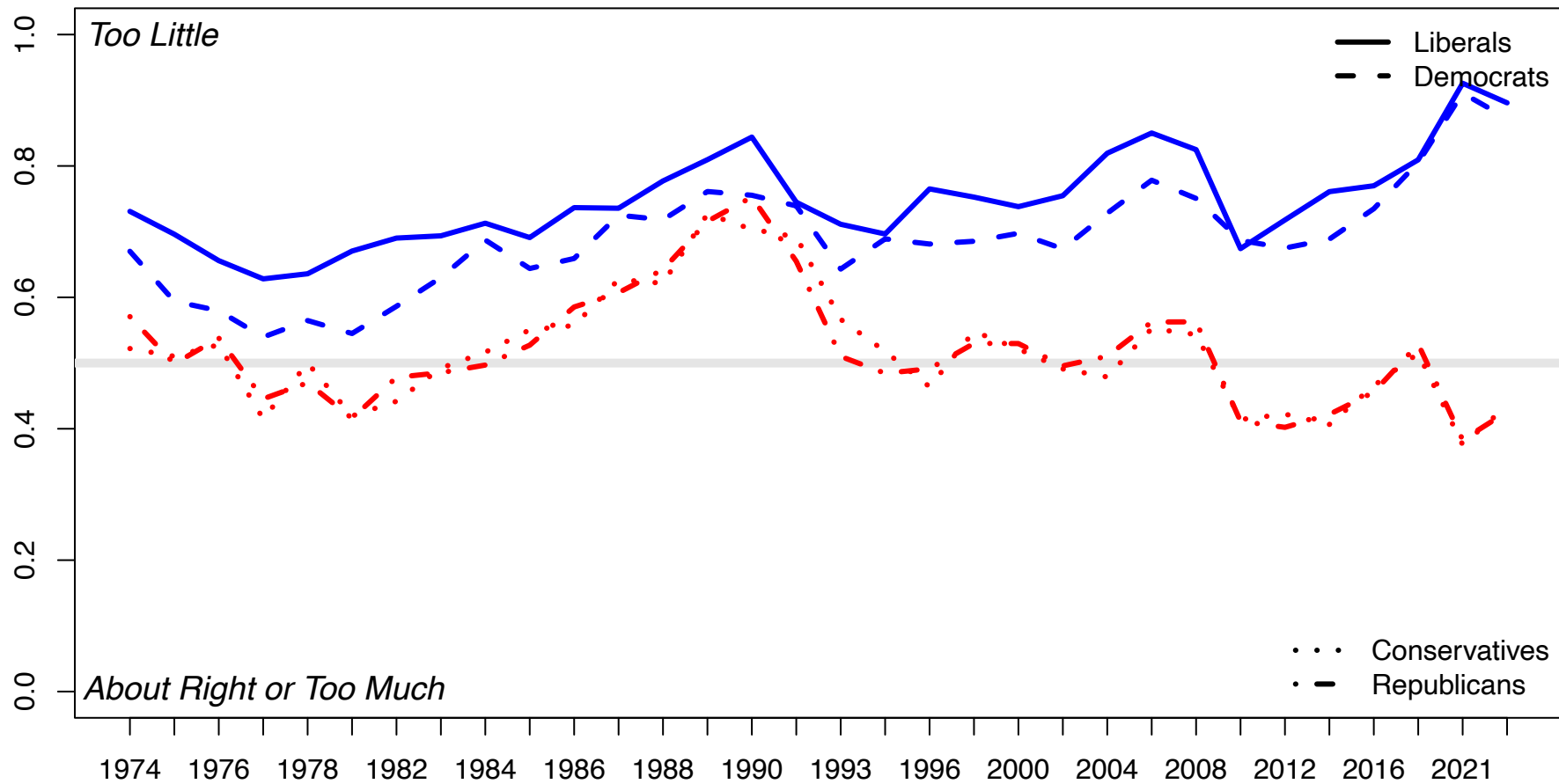


***ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE
INCREASINGLY POLARIZED***

Average LCV Score



Spending on the Environment



The Parties are Fundamentally Different

- **Republicans:** *Republican ideology argues for individual liberty as opposed to government interference. Its preference for small government coincides with a pro-business, free-market attitude and thus an aversion to government control*
 - Republicans are ideologically homogeneous
 - *Solution aversion*

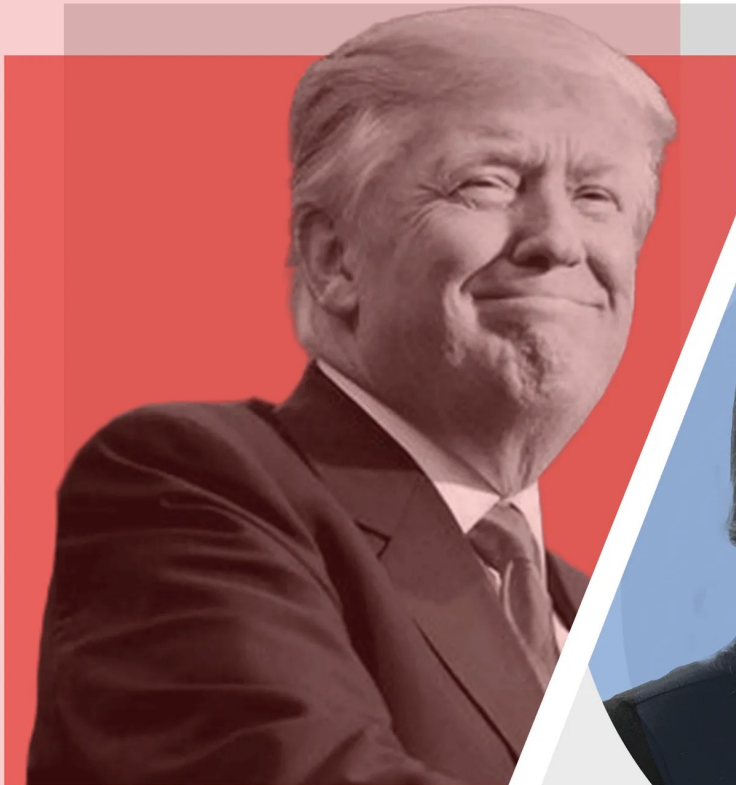
The Parties are Fundamentally Different

- **Democratic:** *Democratic ideology is more commonly associated with liberalism and an acceptance of government involvement in the political, economic, and social lives of people*
 - Democrats are a coalition of groups making demands on government
 - *Environmental groups and labor*

Solution Aversion

Opposition to *government regulation*, the typical policy approach to environmental problems, is a key driver of partisan polarization

- Regulations
- Market-based solutions
- *Industry policy*



Looking Ahead

- The Supreme Court
- The Inflation Reduction Act
- State and local government

Key Takeaways

- The parties are polarized, so *elections matter*
- But it's nuanced
 - The Court
 - State and local government