

SWING VOTE SAM EXPLAINS

The Swing Vote

SAM SAYS

"A close House is a seesaw. You're the weight."

The most powerful point on a lever is the fulcrum. The House has 435 seats, and 218 is a majority of a full House. When it's close, every seat counts.

Every January the House has to elect a Speaker before it can do anything else. In January 2023 that took 15 ballots, the most since before the Civil War, with a majority in the room.

Now picture ten seats that answer to no party. They don't run the place. They set the price: an on-time budget, floor votes for bills with support on both sides, term limits put to a recorded vote. That's an argument, not a statistic. Third parties aimed at the presidency in 1912 (27.4 percent) and 1992 (18.9 percent, zero electoral votes). Wrong target.

The facts

1. The House has 435 voting members. A majority of the full House is 218.[1]
2. The January 2023 Speaker election took 15 ballots, the most since the 1859 to 1860 contest, which took 44. The most ever was 133 ballots, in 1855 to 1856.[2]
3. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party took 27.4 percent of the popular vote. In 1992 independent Ross Perot took 18.9 percent and no electoral votes.[3,4]

What you can do

1. Look up how close the race for your House seat is expected to be, and who is running.
2. Check your registration. **vote.gov**
3. Show up. In a close House, you're the weight.

Scan to watch Sam explain it
swingvotesam.com/issues/swing-vote

Sources
1. U.S. House of Representatives, "The House Explained". https://www.house.gov/the-house-explained
2. U.S. House, History, Art & Archives, "Speaker Elections Decided by Multiple Ballots". https://history.house.gov/People/Office/Speakers-Multiple-Ballots/
3. The American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara, "1912 presidential election". https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1912
4. The American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara, "1992 presidential election". https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections/1992

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