

# In The Presidential Election Of 1968, Republican Candidate

**In The Presidential Election Of 1968, Republican Candidate** emerged as a pivotal figure in American political history. This election was marked by profound social upheaval, widespread protests, and a nation deeply divided over issues such as the Vietnam War, civil rights, and cultural change. The Republican candidate who ultimately secured the presidency was Richard Nixon, a seasoned politician with a complex legacy and a strategic vision aimed at restoring stability and order to a tumultuous America. This article explores the life, political career, campaign strategies, and legacy of the Republican candidate in the 1968 presidential election, providing comprehensive insights into this critical moment in U.S. history.

## Background of the 1968 Presidential Election

The 1968 presidential election was one of the most tumultuous in American history. The country was grappling with:

- The Vietnam War's escalating conflict and widespread protests
- Civil rights movements leading to significant social change
- Urban riots and racial tensions
- A divided Democratic Party following the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy
- The rise of the "New Left" and countercultural movements

Amid this chaos, the political landscape was shifting, and voters sought leadership that promised stability, law and order, and a return to traditional values. The Republican Party, recognizing the opportunity, nominated its candidate who embodied these themes.

## Richard Nixon: The Republican Candidate

### Early Life and Political Career

Richard Nixon was born on January 9, 1913, in Yorba Linda, California. His early life was marked by humble beginnings, but he quickly established himself as an astute and ambitious individual. His political career included:

- Serving as a U.S. Congressman from California (1947-1950)
- Serving as Vice President under President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961)
- Running unsuccessfully for president in 1960 against John F. Kennedy
- Facing a political setback after losing the California governor's race in 1962

Despite these setbacks, Nixon remained a prominent figure within the Republican Party, known for his foreign policy expertise and pragmatic approach.

# Political Ideology and Campaign Positioning

Nixon's political stance in 1968 was characterized by conservative principles and a focus on restoring order and stability. Key aspects of his ideology included:

- A tough stance against communism and the Vietnam War
- Advocacy for law and order domestically
- Support for traditional family values and conservative social policies
- Emphasis on a strong American identity and patriotism
- Economic policies favoring free-market principles

His campaign aimed to appeal to middle-class voters, suburban residents, and conservative Democrats disillusioned with the Democratic Party's direction.

## The 1968 Campaign Strategy

### Southern Strategy and Electoral Appeal

One of Nixon's most notable campaign strategies was the "Southern Strategy," which sought to attract white voters in the South who were disenchanted with the Democratic Party's support for civil rights legislation. This approach involved:

- Appealing to "law and order" sentiments
- Using coded language to resonate with segregationist voters
- Positioning himself as a candidate who would restore stability in the face of social unrest

This strategy helped Nixon secure crucial electoral votes in the South, a region pivotal to his victory.

### Campaign Promises and Key Messages

Nixon's campaign focused on several core messages:

- Restoring law and order amidst protests and riots
- Ending the Vietnam War through "peace with honor"
- Promoting economic growth and stability
- Curtailing federal intervention in local affairs
- Upholding traditional American values

He also emphasized the need to unify the country and heal divisions caused by the tumult of the 1960s.

# The Election Results and Nixon's Victory

The 1968 election was highly competitive, with three major candidates:

- Richard Nixon (Republican)
- Hubert Humphrey (Democratic)
- George Wallace (American Independent)

Nixon's electoral strategy paid off, and he secured the presidency with:

- 301 electoral votes
- Approximately 43.4% of the popular vote

George Wallace's third-party candidacy drew votes away from Democrats, particularly in the South, further benefiting Nixon. His victory marked a turning point toward a more conservative era in American politics.

## Impact and Legacy of Nixon's Presidency

Although this article focuses on his role as the Republican candidate in 1968, it's essential to note the lasting influence Nixon had as president, including:

- Policy achievements such as opening diplomatic relations with China
- Environmental initiatives like the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- The controversial Watergate scandal leading to his resignation in 1974

His 1968 campaign is often credited with shaping modern political strategies, especially the effective use of regional appeals and messaging that addressed voters' fears and aspirations.

## Conclusion

*In The Presidential Election Of 1968, Republican Candidate Richard Nixon emerged as a figure who capitalized on a nation seeking stability amid chaos. His campaign's focus on law and order, opposition to radical social change, and strategic regional appeals helped him secure the presidency during a pivotal moment in American history. Nixon's victory reflected the shifting political landscape and set the stage for decades of conservative influence in U.S. policy and culture. Understanding Nixon's role in 1968 offers critical insights into the complexities of American political dynamics and the enduring impact of that election on the nation's trajectory.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

## **Who was the Republican candidate in the 1968 presidential election?**

The Republican candidate in the 1968 presidential election was Richard Nixon.

## **What were the main campaign issues for the Republican candidate in 1968?**

The main campaign issues included law and order, opposition to the Vietnam War, and restoring American confidence amidst social unrest.

## **How did Richard Nixon secure the Republican nomination in 1968?**

Richard Nixon secured the Republican nomination after a series of primaries and a contested convention, leveraging his experience as Vice President and appealing to conservative voters.

## **What was the significance of the 1968 Republican campaign in American politics?**

The 1968 Republican campaign marked a shift towards more conservative policies and a focus on law and order, influencing the political landscape during a tumultuous era.

## **Who was Richard Nixon's running mate in the 1968 election?**

Richard Nixon's running mate was Spiro Agnew, who served as Vice President if Nixon was elected.

## **What was the outcome of the 1968 presidential election for the Republican candidate?**

Richard Nixon won the 1968 presidential election, becoming the 37th President of the United States.

## **Additional Resources**

**In the presidential election of 1968, Republican candidate** Richard Nixon emerged as a pivotal figure whose campaign and subsequent victory marked a significant turning point in American political history. The 1968 election was characterized by a nation grappling with profound social upheaval, civil rights struggles, the Vietnam War, and a general sense of disillusionment with the existing political establishment. Nixon's candidacy, strategy, and eventual triumph reflected both a response to these turbulent times and a reshaping of Republican politics that would influence the nation for decades to come.

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# **Background and Context Leading to the 1968 Election**

## **The Political Climate of the Late 1960s**

The United States in 1968 was a nation divided. The civil rights movement had achieved significant legislative successes but also faced intense opposition and violence. The Vietnam War had escalated, leading to widespread protests and a deepening national divide over foreign policy. Urban riots, anti-war demonstrations, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy added to the unrest. The Democratic Party, traditionally the dominant force in American politics, was fractured—exemplified by the chaotic Democratic National Convention in Chicago, which showcased internal divisions and protests.

This environment created a fertile ground for a candidate like Nixon, who positioned himself as a figure of stability, law and order, and a return to traditional American values. The Republican Party sought to capitalize on the perceived failures of the incumbent Democratic administration under President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was embroiled in the unpopularity of the Vietnam War and internal party conflicts.

## **The Republican Nomination Race**

The Republican primary race in 1968 was marked by three prominent contenders:

- Richard Nixon: The former Vice President (under Dwight D. Eisenhower), who had run unsuccessfully in 1960. Nixon's political experience and moderate conservatism made him a formidable candidate.
- Nelson Rockefeller: The governor of New York, representing the more liberal, Rockefeller wing of the party, advocating for a more moderate approach.
- Ronald Reagan: The charismatic former actor and governor of California, representing a rising conservative movement.

Nixon's campaign was strategic and well-organized. He positioned himself as the candidate of "law and order," appealing to voters concerned about social unrest and crime. His experience in national politics and his reputation as a seasoned strategist gave him a significant edge.

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## **Richard Nixon's Campaign Strategy and Political Positioning**

### **Appealing to the Silent Majority**

One of Nixon's key campaign themes was the appeal to the so-called "Silent Majority"—middle-class

Americans who were not actively protesting but felt alienated by the radical elements of the counterculture, civil rights protests, and anti-war demonstrations. Nixon's rhetoric emphasized restoring stability, law and order, and traditional values.

He portrayed himself as a pragmatic outsider—someone who could bridge the gap between the establishment and the common American. This messaging resonated with voters desiring a return to normalcy amidst chaos.

## **Focus on Law and Order**

The 1960s had seen a rise in urban riots and civil unrest, notably in cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Nixon's emphasis on law and order was designed to appeal to voters frightened by violence and disorder. His campaign promised vigorous responses to crime and a crackdown on protests that challenged authority.

This stance resonated particularly with suburban voters and those who felt threatened by the social upheaval and wanted a leader who prioritized stability and safety.

## **Strategic Use of Campaign Tactics**

Nixon's campaign employed sophisticated strategy:

- Southern Strategy: Nixon aimed to secure the South's support by subtly appealing to racial tensions and opposing federal intervention in civil rights issues. This approach sought to realign the traditionally Democratic South with the Republican Party.
- Negative Campaigning: Nixon used targeted attacks on his opponents, especially Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic candidate, emphasizing chaos and unrest associated with the Democratic Party.
- Media and Advertising: Nixon's campaign made effective use of television advertising, including the famous "Checkers Speech," which helped him recover from a fundraising scandal and restore public confidence.

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## **The Republican Candidate: Richard Nixon**

### **Biographical Overview**

Richard Milhous Nixon was born in 1913 in Yorba Linda, California. A Yale Law School graduate, Nixon's political career began with his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946, followed by his election to the Senate in 1950. His reputation was bolstered by his role as a key anti-Communist figure and his leadership on foreign policy issues during the Eisenhower administration.

His tenure as Vice President from 1953 to 1961 was marked by efforts to expand U.S. influence

abroad and manage Cold War tensions. Despite setbacks, including the 1960 presidential loss to John F. Kennedy and a brief period out of the political limelight, Nixon reemerged as a prominent contender for the presidency.

## **Political Ideology and Philosophy**

Nixon's conservatism was pragmatic and centrist, blending a commitment to free enterprise with an understanding of the need for social order. He supported strong anti-Communist policies, federal intervention on law and order issues, and a cautious approach to civil rights legislation, often emphasizing states' rights.

He believed in a balanced approach to government, advocating for a robust foreign policy and a cautious stance on social reform, aligning with voters who favored stability over rapid change.

## **Key Strengths and Weaknesses**

Strengths:

- Extensive political experience and foreign policy expertise.
- Ability to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters, including moderates and conservatives.
- Effective campaign organization and messaging.

Weaknesses:

- Past political controversies, including accusations of dishonesty, which Nixon later sought to address.
- Association with the Eisenhower administration, which some viewed as outdated by 1968.
- The perception of being part of the political establishment, which could alienate anti-establishment voters.

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## **Election Results and Impact**

### **Victory and Electoral College Outcome**

Richard Nixon won the 1968 presidential race with 301 electoral votes to Hubert Humphrey's 191, and George Wallace's 46. His popular vote tally was approximately 43.4%, with Humphrey garnering about 42.7%, and Wallace gaining around 13.5%. The narrow popular vote margin underscored the divided nature of the electorate.

Nixon's victory was facilitated by his successful appeal to the Silent Majority, his strategic Southern strategy, and his ability to capitalize on the unrest and dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party.

# Significance of Nixon's Election

Nixon's election marked a conservative realignment in American politics. It signaled a shift towards law-and-order policies, increased focus on domestic stability, and a more assertive foreign policy stance, exemplified by the Vietnamization strategy and eventual détente with the Soviet Union.

The election also reflected the fracturing of the Democratic Party and the rise of identity-based political strategies, such as Nixon's appeal to white voters in the South and working-class Americans.

## Long-Term Consequences

Nixon's presidency would have profound consequences:

- Vietnam War: His policies aimed to de-escalate and eventually end American involvement.
- Watergate Scandal: The political fallout from his administration's misconduct would lead to his resignation in 1974.
- Realignment of Political Coalitions: The 1968 election set the stage for the conservative resurgence and the transformation of the Republican Party into a dominant force in American politics.

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## Conclusion: The Legacy of the 1968 Republican Candidate

Richard Nixon's candidacy in 1968 reflected both the anxieties and aspirations of a nation in flux. His campaign's emphasis on law and order, stability, and pragmatic conservatism resonated with a significant segment of Americans seeking reassurance amid upheaval. His victory signaled a political realignment that would influence subsequent generations and shape American policy and politics well beyond the tumultuous 1960s.

Nixon's election was not merely a product of political strategy but also a reflection of a broader societal shift—one that acknowledged the deep divisions within the country and responded with a promise of order and restoration. The 1968 Republican candidate's legacy remains intertwined with the complexities of that pivotal era, illustrating how leadership can both mirror and influence the course of history.

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