

I know several people who disagreed with Trump's proposed economic policies, thought his behavior was offensive, yet they voted for him anyway. These people only cared about one issue -- they wanted a president who would appoint conservative justices to the Supreme Court. I also know people who voted for the presidential candidate from the Democratic Party, simply because they wanted a president who would appoint liberals to the Supreme Court. These single-issue voters can play an important role in determining a presidential election's outcome. The presidential candidate, who does the best job firing up voters, who are aligned with his / her party, but who also only care about judicial appointments, has an advantage in the election. Most likely, in the 2020 Presidential election the Democrats will benefit more from these single-issue voters than the Republicans will.

To understand why the Democrats will have an advantage in 2020, we can turn to Nobel Laureate Richard Thaler. In his book *Nudge*, Thaler describes loss aversion, which is the idea that people care more about avoiding a loss than they do about getting a gain of equal value. More specifically, Thaler considers a bet on a coin flip. He explains that a person will not take a bet if she wins \$100 if the coin flip result is heads, if she also loses \$100 if the result is tails. The person will need to win \$200 if she wins to be willing to risk \$100 if she loses.

The stakes, as far as Supreme Court appointments go, are that the 2020 presidential winner will probably get to appoint two justices. The two oldest justices will probably step down during the next presidential term. They are Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who is currently 85, and Stephen Breyer, who is 79. The remaining justices range in age from 50 to 70 and most likely will remain in office for quite some time.

Both Ginsburg and Breyer were appointed by Democratic presidents. Therefore, the next presidential election gives republicans a chance to benefit from putting two more conservatives on the bench. Democrats will try to avoid losing two seats, and they hope to replace the liberal leaning justices that retire with justices who share the same values.

Let us assume the one-issue voting blocs are similar across the political parties. In this case, loss aversion suggests that the typical one-issue democratic voter will care twice as much about losing a Supreme Court Seat, as the typical, one-issue republican voter will care about gaining a seat.

The intense desire to avoid the losses of judicial seats will energize democratic voters. They will be more likely to turnout to vote, more likely to contribute money to campaigns, and more likely to become involved in helping their preferred candidate.

The democratic presidential candidate will have an energized single-issue base, while the republican candidate will have a single-issue base that will be less enthused and less consequential.

Of course, a presidential election can turn on many issues, such as economic conditions, international security, and so on.

However, the issue of "who do we want to make our Supreme Court nominations" should favor the democrats in 2020.

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