how many times have the party in power won the midterm election

Copilot Search

How Often the Party in Power Wins U.S. Midterms

Since 1862, the president's party has won (gained seats in) the U.S. House in only 3 of 65 midterm elections — about 4.6% of the time — and has lost in the other 62 cases Dave Manuel.

Historical breakdown

- **Total midterms since 1862:** 65
- **Times the president's party gained House seats:** 3
  - **1934** – Franklin D. Roosevelt (D): +9 House, +10 Senate seats Dave Manuel
  - **1998** – Bill Clinton (D): +5 House, 0 Senate seats Dave Manuel
  - **2002** – George W. Bush (R): +8 House, +2 Senate seats Dave Manuel
- **Times the president's party lost House seats:** 62 (95.4% of midterms) Dave Manuel

This long-standing pattern is often called the "iron law of midterms" — the party in power almost always loses seats in the House during midterms Dave Manuel+1.

Modern era (since 1946)

- **Total midterms since 1946:** 20
- **Wins (House gains):** 2
  - **1998** – Clinton (D): +5 House

- **2002** – Bush (R): +8 House Dave Manuel+1

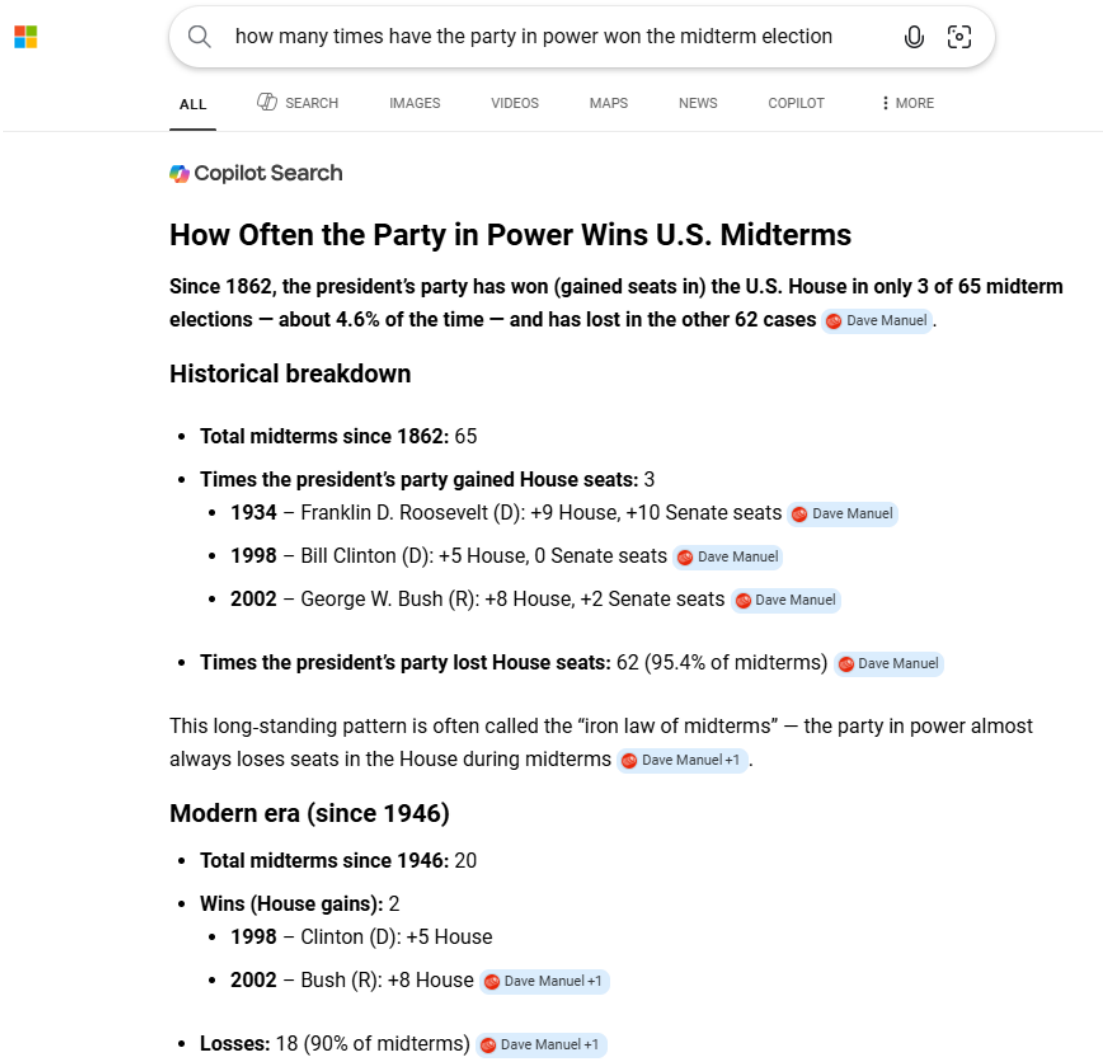
- **Losses:** 18 (90% of midterms) Dave Manuel+1

Why the pattern exists

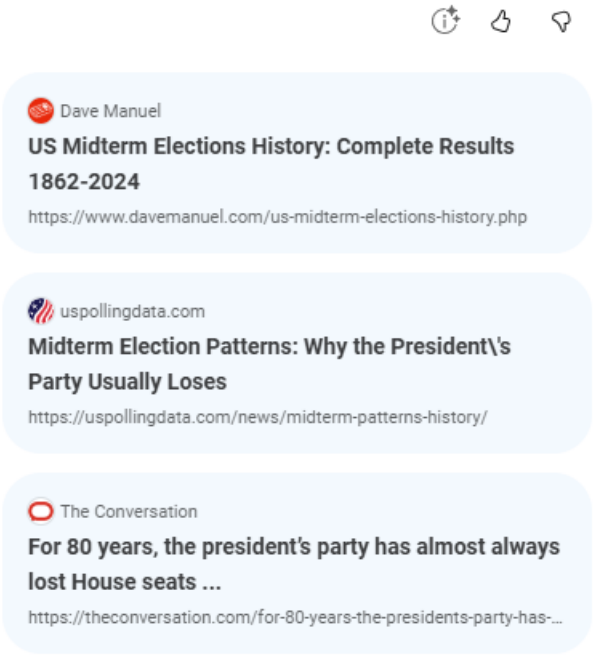
Political scientists note that midterms act as a referendum on the sitting president's performance. Opposition voters are typically more motivated, while the president's supporters may be less engaged,

leading to net losses for the incumbent party uspollingdata.com+1.

In short: The party in power has won the House in only 3 of 65 midterms since 1862, and just 2 of 20 since 1946 — making it one of the most consistent patterns in U.S. political history.



Why the pattern exists

Political scientists note that midterms act as a referendum on the sitting president's performance. Opposition voters are typically more motivated, while the president's supporters may be less engaged, leading to net losses for the incumbent party uspollingdata.com +1.

In short: The party in power has won the House in only 3 of 65 midterms since 1862, and just 2 of 20 since 1946 — making it one of the most consistent patterns in U.S. political history.