Crazy Train: Politics of High-Speed Rail

Stephen Martin
What is HSR?

- Trains travelling over 125 mph
- Competitive with driving and flying between 100 & 500 miles
- Cleaner than either
- Prevalent in the rest of the world
- Not a lot in the US
Geographic Polarization

Political Polarization: Separation of beliefs

Geographic Polarization: Physical separation

Post-WWII Suburbanization

Dems = Cities, Reps = Suburbs

Redlining, covenants, zoning
Geographic Polarization (cont.)

1968 Election

Party matters more than location

Opposition to Urban investments
HSR under Obama and Trump

2008 California Prop 1A

$8 billion in the Stimulus Package

2010 Midterms

GOP govs refuse $ in OH, WI, and FL

Trump cuts CA funding
Amtrak Joe and the Future

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Billions for rail

Brightline, first private rail carrier in decades

Realignment

2024 Election