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## The Era of Small-Government Democrats

I'm reading Thomas McCraw's [Prophets of Regulation](#), and I was struck by this passage:

*Brandeis's positions on national issues tended to follow traditional Democratic Party tenets of free trade, sound money, and minimal government. He distrusted alike the free-silver evangelism of William Jennings Bryan, the high-tariff protectionism of traditional Republicans, and the hints of big government and statism represented by Theodore Roosevelt. In the election of 1912, Brandeis' original choice for the presidency was his good friend [Robert M. La Follette](#), but the candidacy of "Fighting Bob" collapsed, leaving Brandeis temporarily without a candidate.*

While the major themes of early 20th century politics weren't that different than those of our day, America's political coalitions have been scrambled beyond recognition.