



United States Elections Project


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Voter Turnout

Voter turnout rates presented here show that the much-lamented decline in voter participation is an artifact of poor measurement. Previously, turnout rates were calculated by dividing the number of votes

by what is called the "voting-age population" which consists of everyone age 18 and older residing in the United States (the [yellow](#) line to the right). This includes persons ineligible to vote, mainly non-citizens and ineligible felons, and excludes overseas eligible voters. When turnout rates are calculated for those eligible to vote, a new picture of turnout emerges, which exhibits no decline since 1972 (the [green](#) line to the right). Indeed, turnout rates appear to have been restored to their earlier high levels as of 2008.

The response to these facts have been mixed. The Census Bureau and the Center for the Study of the American Electorate now report citizen voting-age population turnout rates, which accounts for the largest ineligible group, non-citizens. Professors around the

country assign the publications accompanying this research to their classes and it appears in many textbooks and reference volumes. Still, many pundits and academics continue to opine about voting declines. Some are actively trying to discredit these facts since it refutes a large volume of academic research on declining turnout rates, what one leading set of authors described as the "...most studied, most conjectured, and most important trend in the study of American government."

Turnout Data

I provide national and state turnout rates for the eligible population from 1980-2006. You can access 2000-2008 elections on the web pages below. These numbers are updated continually as new data become available.

Year	Election	
2008	General	Primary
2006	General	
2004	General	Primary
2002	General	
2000	General	Primary

You can also download an Excel spreadsheet (2003 format) for the full series from 1980-2008:

[Turnout 1980-2008.xls](#)

Elections Blog

I track a number of other issues, such as early voting and voter registration, on my [elections blog](#).

Related Publications

See here for a [listing](#) voter turnout related peer-reviewed academic journal articles, significant reports, opinion-editorials, and media coverage.

**Presidential Turnout Rates
1948-2008**



Frequently Asked Questions

I answer many questions about the statistics provided here. Before contacting me, please read my [FAQ](#).

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