



2016

Report of

**Elections in
Washington**

State

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Introduction

During the 2015-16 biennium, the Legislature passed HB 2852 requiring the Office of the Secretary of State to conduct and publish a statewide survey of voted ballots, rejection rates, and the reasons for those rejections in every odd-numbered year. County auditors and canvassing boards review ballots and occasionally are not able to count a ballot. The data collected must include rejection rates and reasons for rejection of voted ballots for all elections. The survey must include an analysis of current practices by county auditors and canvassing boards in the acceptance and rejection of ballots, and include recommendations for improvements that minimize rejections in those practices, with a goal of statewide standardization where applicable. The results must also be analyzed and compared with available national data and recognized best practices.

During the 2017-18 biennium, the Legislature passed HB 1507 requiring the Office of the Secretary of State to produce a report that included an analysis of election data. The analysis must combine available data over multiple years to provide broader comparisons and trends regarding voter registration, turnout and ballot counting. The analysis must also incorporate national election statistics to the extent such information is available.

In order to produce good comparative analysis between current and previous years, the Office of the Secretary of State used data available in the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) that is published by the federal Election Assistance Commission (EAC) every two years. EAVS includes voter registration and voting data for each county in every state and has been published since 2004.

During December 2016, Voting Information Systems Manager Stuart Holmes collaborated with each of Washington's 39 counties to collect data and reports specific to their local voter registration system. The information received from the counties was validated against their submitted Election Reconciliation Reports and statistical data available in the state Voter Registration Database (VRDB). If data was unavailable from their system, data from the VRDB was used to complete the survey.

King County changed voter registration systems in December 2015 so the data-gathering for voter registration was conducted mostly from the state VRDB. The entirety of the EAVS dataset is included as an appendix to this report.

Voter Registrations

EAVS - Section A

Active and Inactive Voters

In February 2016, Washington State reached 4 million registered voters for the first time. At the time of this report, total active voters reached 4,277,499, which is about 77% of the voting age population or 83% of the voting eligible population¹.

Additionally, at the time of this report, there were 594,886 voters who were considered “inactive” – that is, eligible voters who were not mailed a ballot. These are voters who have changed addresses and have not responded to follow-up communication attempts. A voter is placed on inactive status if his or her ballot or any other election material is returned as undeliverable by the postal service. The county elections department then attempts to reach the voter by mailing postcards to all of the individual’s known addresses to notify him or her of the inactive status designation. The voter can easily return himself or herself to “active” status at any time by contacting the elections department or visiting MyVote.wa.gov. If no action is taken, however, the individual’s registration will expire after two federal elections pass.

Registrations Received

Over 1 million (1,039,134) registrations were received between October 2014 and October 2016. A majority of those were new registrations (66.3%) with duplicate registrations², updates, and cross-county address changes all splitting the remaining 44% somewhat evenly.

Registrations by Source

Motor Voter³ remains the most popular method for new voters to become registered to vote with 44% of the total registrations coming in from the Department of Licensing. However, Online Voter Registration using the Office of the Secretary of State’s MyVote.wa.gov website increased its share of the total registrations from 18% in EAVS 2012⁴ to 22% in 2016.

Registration drives lost some popularity as their share of total registrations dropped from 11% in 2012 to 5% in 2016.

Of the total duplicate registrations received, 45% were received from Motor Voter, which is what we’d expect since Motor Voter is the source of 44% of the total registrations. Surprisingly, 30% of duplicate registrations are received by mail, even though only 15% of the total registrations are received by mail.

1 - Voting eligible population estimates collected from United States Elections Project (<http://www.electproject.org>).

2 - A duplicate registration is a registration received by the county from an existing voter that has no name or address changes.

3 - Motor Voter is a voter registration that specifically takes place at the Department of Licensing.

4 - 2012’s EAVS Report covered October 2010 - October 2012.

Active and Inactive Voters

Jurisdiction	Active Voters	Inactive Voters
ADAMS	6,689	582
ASOTIN	14,118	2,524
BENTON	107,775	5,988
CHELAN	43,477	2,970
CLALLAM	50,987	4,350
CLARK	273,240	32,694
COLUMBIA	2,719	306
COWLITZ	63,473	7,359
DOUGLAS	21,070	1,013
FERRY	4,675	531
FRANKLIN	34,100	4,949
GARFIELD	1,553	233
GRANT	39,319	6,601
GRAYS HARBOR	40,531	6,896
ISLAND	55,089	5,831
JEFFERSON	24,557	2,345
KING	1,288,327	117,631
KITSAP	166,501	16,219
KITTITAS	24,521	2,759
KLICKITAT	13,974	1,967
LEWIS	46,094	3,929
LINCOLN	7,090	393
MASON	37,824	3,236
OKANOGAN	22,456	2,085
PACIFIC	14,097	1,291
PEND OREILLE	8,918	1,278
PIERCE	490,666	55,903
SAN JUAN	12,798	775
SKAGIT	73,990	6,920
SKAMANIA	7,451	802
SNOHOMISH	456,502	42,552
SPOKANE	306,261	28,652
STEVENS	30,047	2,846
THURSTON	175,078	19,343
WAHKIAKUM	3,008	264
WALLA WALLA	33,538	3,483
WHATCOM	139,165	12,094
WHITMAN	21,629	3,634
YAKIMA	114,192	9,119
	4,277,499	594,886

Registrations Received

New Valid	688,558	66.3%
Duplicate of Existing	143,560	13.8%
In-County Updates	159,530	15.4%
Cross-County Updates	139,193	13.4%

Registrations by Source

Mailed-in	153,704	15%
Registrar Office	48,632	5%
Internet	222,406	22%
Motor Vehicle Office	441,167	44%
Combined State Agencies	35,366	3%
Public Assistance Office	30,904	3%
State Agency Serving Persons with Disabilities	230	0%
Armed Forces Recruitment Offices	10,898	1%
Other Agencies Not Mandated by NVRA	4,232	0%
Registration Drives	46,417	5%
Other	54,905	5%

Primary Turnout and Ballot Counting

Reconciliation Reports

Turnout

Prior to 1938, voter registration was handled by the city clerks and, in unincorporated areas, by the County Auditor. It was not until the election reforms of the early 1930s that the oversight of voter list management transferred to the County Auditor. Prior to that, each city clerk managed their own list and did not publish voter registration numbers. No precinct could have more than 250 registered voters and in a state with 898,159 (1938) registered voters that meant 3,593 precincts. There was no singular tracking of overall voter registration numbers until the mid 1930s.

Additionally, the type of Primary held in Washington changed between 2004 and 2008⁵.

For the first time in 10 years, Primary registered voter turnout increased in 2016. However, it is still far below the high-water mark in 1936 and 1940 of over 60% and hasn't broken 50% participation since 1964.

Ballot Counting

A national comparison for Primaries is not possible because there is not centralized data repository for ballot county statistics for state primaries. Additionally, the passage of HB 1507, which required surveying counties for rejected ballot reasons in state primaries, was not passed until after the 2016 Primary. Therefore, that survey will first be conducted in 2017.

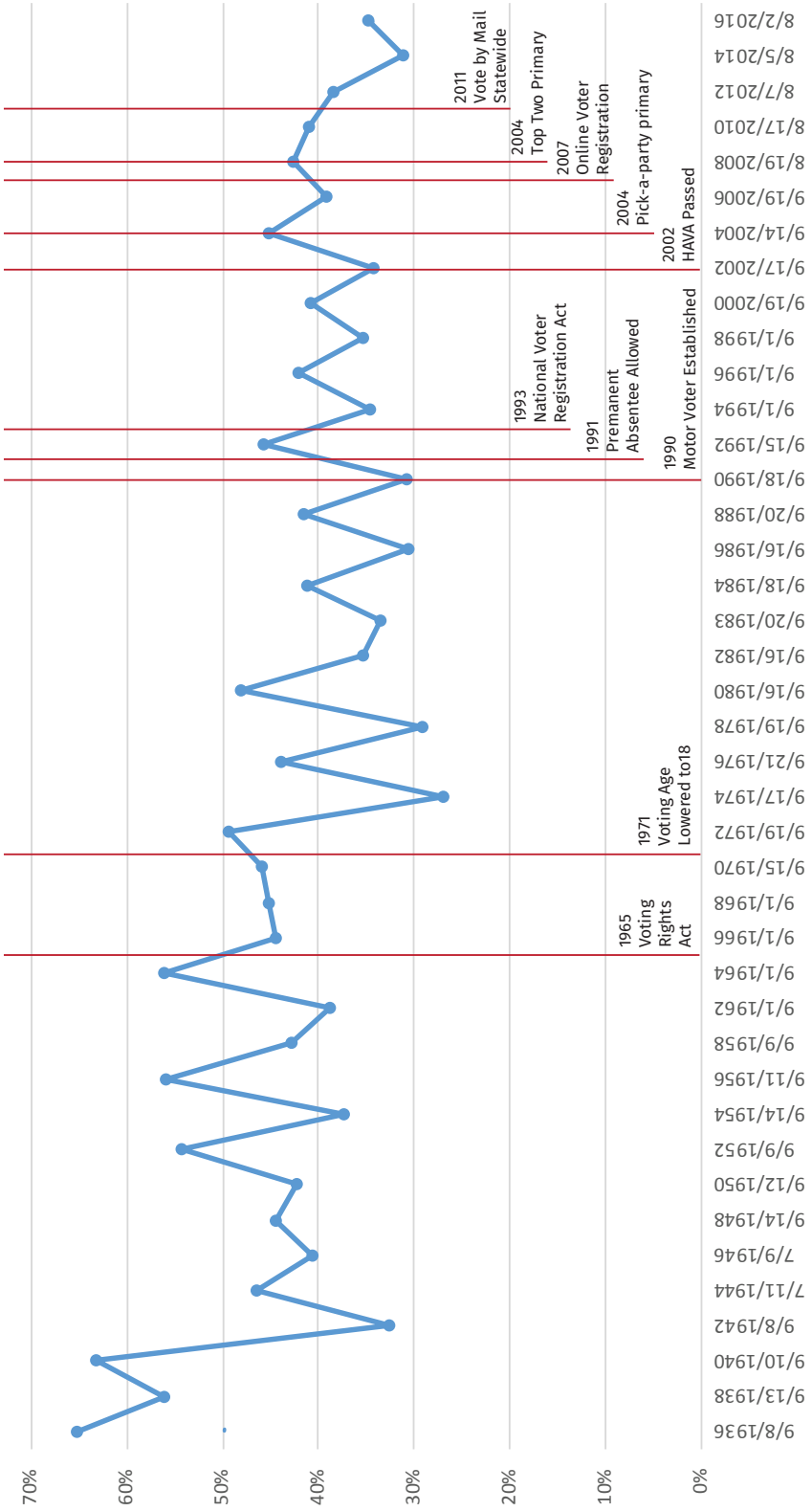
Of all ballots returned, only 1.45% were rejected and not counted. Rejected reason would include voter declaration not signed, signature did not match, and postmarked too late.

Prior to 2016, reconciliation reports were not collected from counties who did not have a state office on the ballot. That unfortunately means that we cannot do any prior year comparisons at this time.

Recommendation

The timing of the Primary election date falls during a time where people may be on vacation and schools are not typically in session. The Primary was moved to August to comply with the federal MOVE Act. Our recommendation is to change the Primary election date to earlier in the year.

Even Year Primary Voter Turnout



UOCAVA (Military and Overseas Voters)

EAVS - Section B⁶

Military and Overseas Citizens

A majority (66.4%) of the registered Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters are domestic or overseas military⁵ voters (aka uniformed services). This is an important statistic because many reports combine military and overseas citizens into a single UOCAVA category. EAVS is one of the only reports where we can see these two groups reported separately and as you'll see below, it is an important context that should be included with the data.

In 2012, EAVS did not include registered totals by military and overseas citizens, however, we were able to use issued ballot totals to identify that UOCAVA ballots issued increased 20.3% for military, 58.0% for overseas citizens, and 39.2% overall from 2012 to 2016.

General Election Turnout

A majority, 58.9%, of registered military voters returned their ballot and 77.2% of overseas citizens returned their ballot. The state turnout for all voters was 78.6%, which doesn't leave overseas citizens too far off the pace. However, military voters fall far behind at 19.7% lower than the state turnout.

Demographics of the military show that about 50% of active duty military are between 22-30 years old so we'd expect that military turnout to be higher than the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups. However, when you compare entire military turnout to the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups, military turnout is between 8-15% lower.

General Election Rejected Ballots

Only 2.3% of the total ballots returned by UOCAVA voters were rejected and not counted. That is a small but significant increase from 2012 when only 1.1% of UOCAVA ballots were rejected. However, if you exclude ballots that were rejected because the county elections department received more than one ballot (i.e. both the electronically returned ballot and mailed ballot) the rejection rate drops to 1.8%.

Of the total UOCAVA ballots rejected, 42.7% were military and 53.3% were citizens overseas. Upwards of 68% of the rejected ballots were not counted because of an issue with the signature. Only 23.7% were rejected as duplicate because more than one ballot was returned. In these situations, the original ballot was counted in the vote totals.

General Election Undeliverable

Only 1.7% of UOCAVA-issued ballots were returned undeliverable in 2016. That is an improvement over 2012 when 2.6% of ballots issued were undeliverable. Over that same period there was a 39.2% increase in ballots issued.

6 - Military voters will include both domestic and foreign unless otherwise specified.

7 - The questions in this section of the survey reflect the need to fully understand the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voting process, which serves an important population segment of the American electorate.

**Military and Overseas Ballots
Returned Undeliverable**

Jurisdiction	Undeliverable	Rate
ADAMS	1	1.9%
ASOTIN	0	0.0%
BENTON	20	2.2%
CHELAN	3	0.6%
CLALLAM	7	0.9%
CLARK	98	3.1%
COLUMBIA	0	0.0%
COWLITZ	3	0.4%
DOUGLAS	5	2.7%
FERRY	1	2.3%
FRANKLIN	3	0.9%
GARFIELD	0	0.0%
GRANT	0	0.0%
GRAYS HARBOR	10	3.0%
ISLAND	133	3.6%
JEFFERSON	0	0.0%
KING	378	1.3%
KITSAP	125	1.3%
KITTITAS	5	1.9%
KLICKITAT	1	0.6%
LEWIS	4	1.0%
LINCOLN	0	0.0%
MASON	8	1.2%
OKANOGAN	0	0.0%
PACIFIC	6	4.1%
PEND OREILLE	5	5.2%
PIERCE	497	2.5%
SAN JUAN	N/A	0.0%
SKAGIT	27	3.9%
SKAMANIA	0	0.0%
SNOHOMISH	22	0.3%
SPOKANE	142	2.2%
STEVENS	14	5.0%
THURSTON	132	1.5%
WAHKIAKUM	0	0.0%
WALLA WALLA	7	1.8%
WHATCOM	31	1.2%
WHITMAN	0	0.0%
YAKIMA	13	1.1%
	1,701	1.7%

Military and Overseas Registered Voters

Registered & Eligible Total	82,980	
Uniformed Services Domestic or Foreign	55,063	66%
Non-military Overseas	27,917	34%

Military and Overseas Rejected Ballot Reasons

Total	1,256	
Missed Deadline	30	2.4%
Problem with Voter Signature	862	68.6%
Returned Other Ballot that was counted	298	23.7%
Other	54	4.3%

Military and Overseas Turnout by Age Group

Age Group	Military	Overseas	Total	Statewide Turnout For Age Group
18	50%	79%	63.0%	61.8%
19	46%	64%	53%	59%
20-24	43%	68%	50%	58%
25-29	55%	69%	58%	64%
30-34	62%	72%	64%	70%
35-39	66%	74%	68%	75%
40-44	68%	74%	69%	78%
45-49	69%	75%	71%	80%
50-54	68%	77%	72%	83%
55-59	69%	78%	75%	86%
60-64	70%	78%	76%	89%
65-69	74%	79%	78%	91%
70-74	75%	78%	78%	92%
75-79	64%	77%	75%	90%
80-84	67%	75%	74%	88%
85+	59%	61%	60%	77%
Grand Total	61%	74%	66%	79%

Vote by Mail Voters (Domestic Voters)

EAVS - Section C

General Election Ballots Issued

For the first time in our state's history, counties issued over 4 million ballots. With 4.3 million total ballots issued in 2016, this is roughly 500,000 more than in 2014 or 2012.

General Election Undeliverable Ballots

Undeliverable ballots seem to be an emerging topic nationally in vote by mail, however, Washington's efforts to ensure accuracy of the voter rolls seems to be having a positive effect. In 2012, 1.5% of ballots were returned undeliverable (prior to when the ERIC data integrity report became available). Now, four years later, we report 1.1% returned undeliverable, all in a year that had half a million more ballots issued than ever before.

Among counties reporting undeliverable ballots⁷, Grant County led the way with a 0.01% undeliverable rate. Twenty-three counties reported less than a 1.0% undeliverable rate. Whitman County reported the highest undeliverable rate at 4.3%. Neither Grant County nor Whitman County automatically forward its ballots if the voter has moved. On average, counties that forward their ballots had half the undeliverable rate than those that didn't (0.98% vs. 2.1%).

General Election Rejected Ballots

Less than 1.0% of all the ballots returned were rejected and not counted, matching our rejection rate in 2012. Garfield County led the state with a 0.08% rejection rate with Ferry County right behind with 0.11%. Adams and Kittitas counties both reported a 1.6% rejection rate, which was the highest. Amongst Vote-by-mail States, Washington's acceptance rate was 96.7%, Oregon⁸ reported 96.8% (*see footnote*), and Colorado was an even 97%.

The most common reason for rejected ballots was non-matching signature (58%). Of all ballots returned, 0.53% of them were rejected for non-matching signature in 2016. That is slightly higher than 0.38% in 2012. However, this may be due to the decrease of ballots rejected for other reasons like missing the postmark deadline or returned without a signature.

Best Practice Recommendation

There are several counties that excel in non-matching signature rejection rate but in Snohomish County, non-matching signatures only made up 24% of their rejected ballots (or 0.1% of their returned ballots) whereas the state average was 58%. Some best practices used in Snohomish County are that every challenged signature is triple-checked, all signature challenge letters are sent within 24 hours, and election workers start calling the voters with challenged signatures early.

8 - Garfield County reported zero undeliverable ballots.

9 - Oregon does not report ballots rejected for being returned after the deadline.

Vote by Mail Ballots Returned Undeliverable

Jurisdiction	Undeliverable	Rate
ADAMS	75	1.1%
ASOTIN	115	0.8%
BENTON	1,690	1.5%
CHELAN	172	0.4%
CLALLAM	1,127	2.2%
CLARK	5,902	2.1%
COLUMBIA	30	1.1%
COWLITZ	449	0.7%
DOUGLAS	18	0.1%
FERRY	25	0.5%
FRANKLIN	290	0.8%
GARFIELD	-	0.0%
GRANT	2	0.0%
GRAYS HARBOR	964	2.4%
ISLAND	283	0.5%
JEFFERSON	90	0.4%
KING	12,705	1.0%
KITSAP	1,659	1.0%
KITTITAS	614	2.5%
KLICKITAT	70	0.5%
LEWIS	233	0.5%
LINCOLN	36	0.5%
MASON	261	0.7%
OKANOGAN	131	0.6%
PACIFIC	151	1.1%
PEND OREILLE	82	0.9%
PIERCE	4,358	0.9%
SAN JUAN	32	0.3%
SKAGIT	2,352	3.1%
SKAMANIA	207	2.8%
SNOHOMISH	6,928	1.5%
SPOKANE	2,408	0.8%
STEVENS	94	0.3%
THURSTON	1,456	0.8%
WAHKIAKUM	17	0.6%
WALLA WALLA	387	1.2%
WHATCOM	1,206	0.9%
WHITMAN	964	4.3%
YAKIMA	1,179	1.0%
TOTAL	48,762	1.1%

Vote by Mail Ballots Counted

Jurisdiction	Percent Counted	Percent Rejected
ADAMS	98.4%	1.6%
ASOTIN	99.5%	0.5%
BENTON	99.3%	0.7%
CHELAN	99.2%	0.8%
CLALLAM	99.1%	0.9%
CLARK	98.9%	1.1%
COLUMBIA	99.7%	0.3%
COWLITZ	99.6%	0.4%
DOUGLAS	99.5%	0.5%
FERRY	99.9%	0.1%
FRANKLIN	99.0%	1.0%
GARFIELD	99.9%	0.1%
GRANT	99.0%	0.8%
GRAYS HARBOR	98.9%	1.1%
ISLAND	99.5%	0.5%
JEFFERSON	99.5%	0.5%
KING	98.9%	1.1%
KITSAP	96.9%	1.0%
KITTITAS	98.4%	1.6%
KLICKITAT	99.5%	0.5%
LEWIS	99.4%	0.6%
LINCOLN	99.5%	0.5%
MASON	99.5%	0.5%
OKANOGAN	99.3%	0.7%
PACIFIC	99.1%	0.9%
PEND OREILLE	99.3%	0.7%
PIERCE	98.7%	1.3%
SAN JUAN	99.8%	0.2%
SKAGIT	99.2%	0.8%
SKAMANIA	99.4%	0.6%
SNOHOMISH	99.5%	0.5%
SPOKANE	99.3%	0.7%
STEVENS	99.6%	0.4%
THURSTON	99.4%	0.6%
WAHKIAKUM	99.7%	0.3%
WALLA WALLA	99.1%	0.9%
WHATCOM	99.3%	0.7%
WHITMAN	98.6%	1.4%
YAKIMA	99.2%	0.8%
TOTAL	99.0%	0.9%

Precincts, Locations, and Provisional Voting

EAVS - Section D-F

Precincts

The total number of precincts in the General Election increased from 7,084 in 2012 to 7,165 in 2016.

Locations

The total number of voting centers (aka polling places in the EAVS report) in the General Election increased from 52 in 2012 to 59 in 2016. These totals do not reflect the total number of ballot drop boxes available.

Provisional Voting

The total number of issued provisional ballots in the 2016 General Election increased by nearly 600% compared to the amount in 2012. The rate of rejection stayed the same at 14%. Spokane County accounted for 46% of the issued provisional ballots in the state with 2,488 provisional ballots. The reason for Spokane County's provisional ballots was due to lack of network connectivity at its voting centers.

Of the 1,653 rejected provisional ballots, 96.3% (or 25.8% of all issued provisionals) were rejected due to not being registered or not registered in time for the November General Election. Only 1.6% were rejected due to non-matching signature and 1.9% were rejected due to the voter already having voted.

As a state, Washington was 8th in the nation in counting of provisional ballots. A national overview of provisional voting can be found later in this report.

2016 Report of Elections in Washington State

March 2017

Provisionals

Jurisdiction	Total	Counted	Forwarded to County	Rejected
ADAMS	3	3	0	0
ASOTIN	6	6	0	0
BENTON	145	49	0	96
CHELAN	40	14	11	15
CLALLAM	8	0	6	2
CLARK	58	22	0	36
COLUMBIA	0	0	0	0
COWLITZ	17	15	2	0
DOUGLAS	25	11	0	14
FERRY	4	4	0	0
FRANKLIN	29	10	6	13
GARFIELD	7	0	7	0
GRANT	0	0	0	0
GRAYS HARBOR	47	9	0	38
ISLAND	18	18	0	0
JEFFERSON	0	0	0	0
KING	761	428	110	223
KITSAP	165	87	23	55
KITTITAS	25	21	4	0
KLICKITAT	3	0	3	0
LEWIS	16	10	6	0
LINCOLN	15	4	5	6
MASON	16	7	4	5
OKANOGAN	24	9	2	13
PACIFIC	5	5	0	0
PEND OREILLE	2	2	0	0
PIERCE	1,200	248	435	517
SAN JUAN	0	0	0	0
SKAGIT	22	22	0	0
SKAMANIA	3	1	1	1
SNOHOMISH	574	187	183	204
SPOKANE	2,488	1,934	313	241
STEVENS	46	29	0	17
THURSTON	213	102	7	104
WAHKIAKUM	0	0	0	0
WALLA WALLA	7	5	1	1
WHATCOM	68	51	5	12
WHITMAN	26	18	5	3
YAKIMA	93	27	29	37
TOTAL	6,179	3,358	1,168	1,653
		54.3%	18.9%	26.75%

Rejected Provisionals

Total	1,653	
Voter Not Registered in State	1592	96.3%
Non-Matching Signature	27	1.6%
Voter Already Voted	32	1.9%
Other	2	0.1%

Provisionals by Year

Year	Submitted	Counted
2004	93,781	74,100
2006	18,780	16,006
2008	54,047	40,771
2010	6,081	4,481
2012	6,832	3,782
2014	1,194	784
2016	6,172	3,358

Ballot Drop Box Expansion and Usage Reconciliation Reports¹⁰

Number of Drop Boxes

In 2016, King County expanded from 10 drop boxes in 2015 to 43 drop boxes by the 2016 General Election. Statewide there were 314 ballot drop box locations for the 2016 General Election open 18 days. With the additional boxes, we anticipated that drop box usage would increase.

Usage Over Time

Since 2012, the usage of drop boxes has exploded from 37% usage to 57% while turnout has remained the same. This could show that drop boxes don't necessarily create new voters, only change the mode in which ballots are returned. However, recently published research advocates for more boxes.

A team of researchers from the University of Washington partnered with the King County Elections Department to study the usage of the new drop boxes. Their findings¹¹ were that the farther a voter is from a drop box they are less likely to vote. Each mile decrease the odds by 2%. The magnitude of the effect depends on the type of election.

"We found that reducing voters' distance to their nearest drop box by one standard deviation increased the likelihood of voting by one to nine percent. Yet the impact of closer drop boxes varies by socio-demographic group and by election type. The effect is larger for primary and off-year elections, and is larger for older and male voters. We also find that reducing distances to the nearest drop box increases turnout only among white (European) voters in general elections. Reducing distance to the nearest drop box increases turnout among all ethnic groups in primary elections, but effects are larger for Asian and African American voters. "

That same team of researchers are currently partnered with the Pierce County Auditor's Office to explore the usage of new ballot drop boxes installed in 2017 by the Auditor's Office to gain more information about their usage, including which drop box the voter used. Which drop box used was not available during the King County study.

Future Expansion

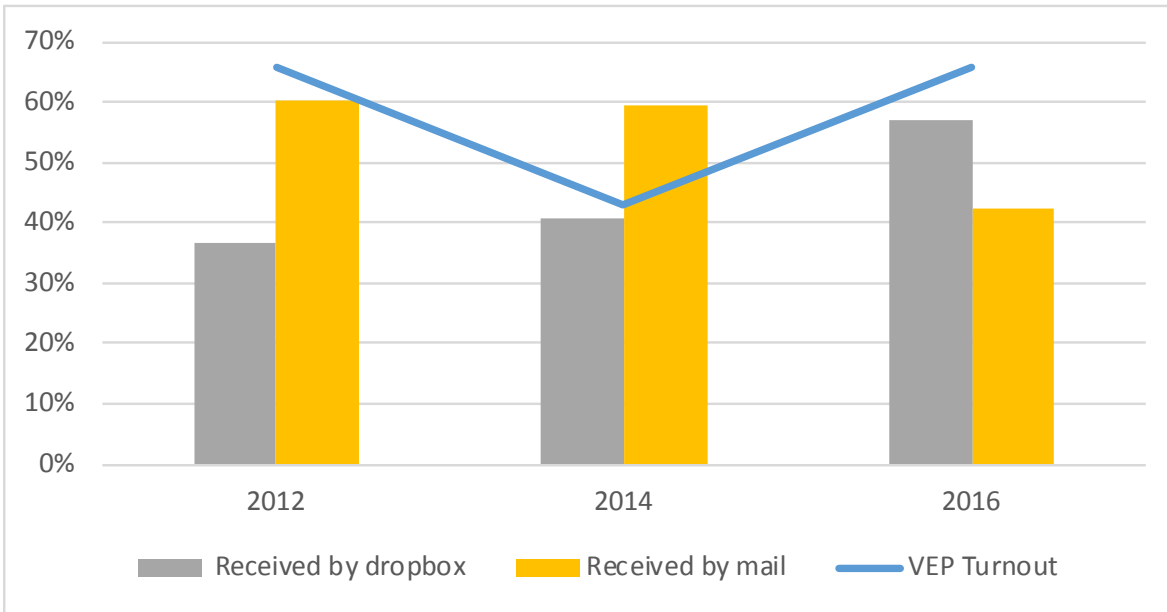
The Legislature passed SSB 5472 in 2017 and required the county auditor to establish a minimum of one ballot drop box in each city, town, and census-designated place in the county with a post office.

At the time of passage, 314 ballot drop box locations were in-place throughout the state. This bill required potentially 260 more ballot drop box locations to be installed.

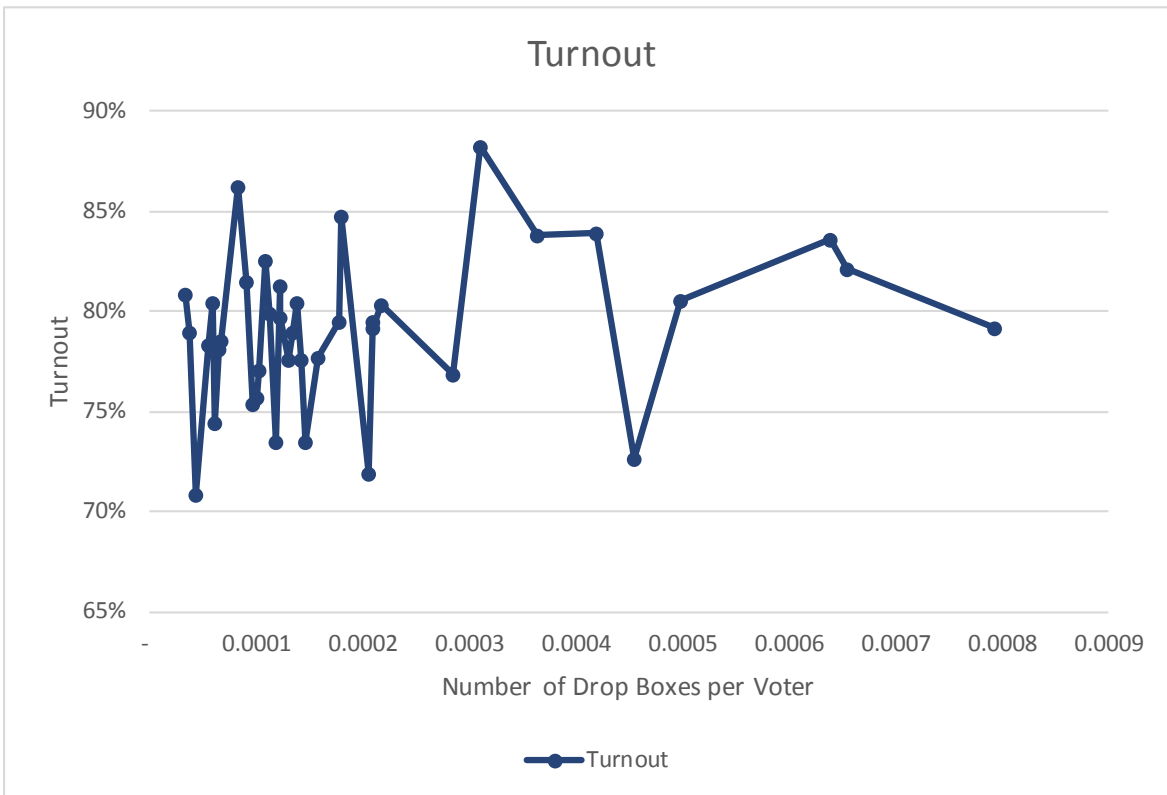
10 - Reconciliation Reports available at vote.wa.gov/data

11 - "Do Drop Boxes Improve Turnout?" - <http://votewashington.org/>

Drop Box Usage with VEP Turnout



Number of Drop Boxes per County Voter with Turnout



Voter Turnout

Reconciliation Reports

Registered Population Rise with Turnout Decline

With 76.83% of the voting age population registered to vote, Washington was at its highest registered population percentage since 1984.

Despite the addition of 33 new ballot drop boxes, registered voter turnout declined in King County by 2.7%. Statewide registered voter turnout declined 2.6% with the highest decline of 4.4% in Pierce County.

Age Demographics

It is not possible to estimate eligible population by county but we can estimate vote age population¹² (VAP). Within only the population that is 18 years old, there was a increase from 2012 to 2016 of 4% population turnout but a decrease of 7% registered voter turnout. In fact, every age group measured had a decrease in registered voter turnout compared to 2012.

Unexpectedly, when reviewing the age demographics we found that VAP turnout increased in younger voters and decreased in older voters. There was a 2% increase in population turnout between 18-49 year olds but a 2.8% decrease in population turnout of the 50 and over population. However, of all registered voters, 18-49 year olds and 50 and over age groups both decreased by 2%.

It may seem unusual to have the population turnout go up and the registered voter turnout go down. However, it can be explained by the fact that there was a 5% increase in registered population since 2012. This may be due to the increased awareness around online voter registration and the continuing popularity of Motor Voter.

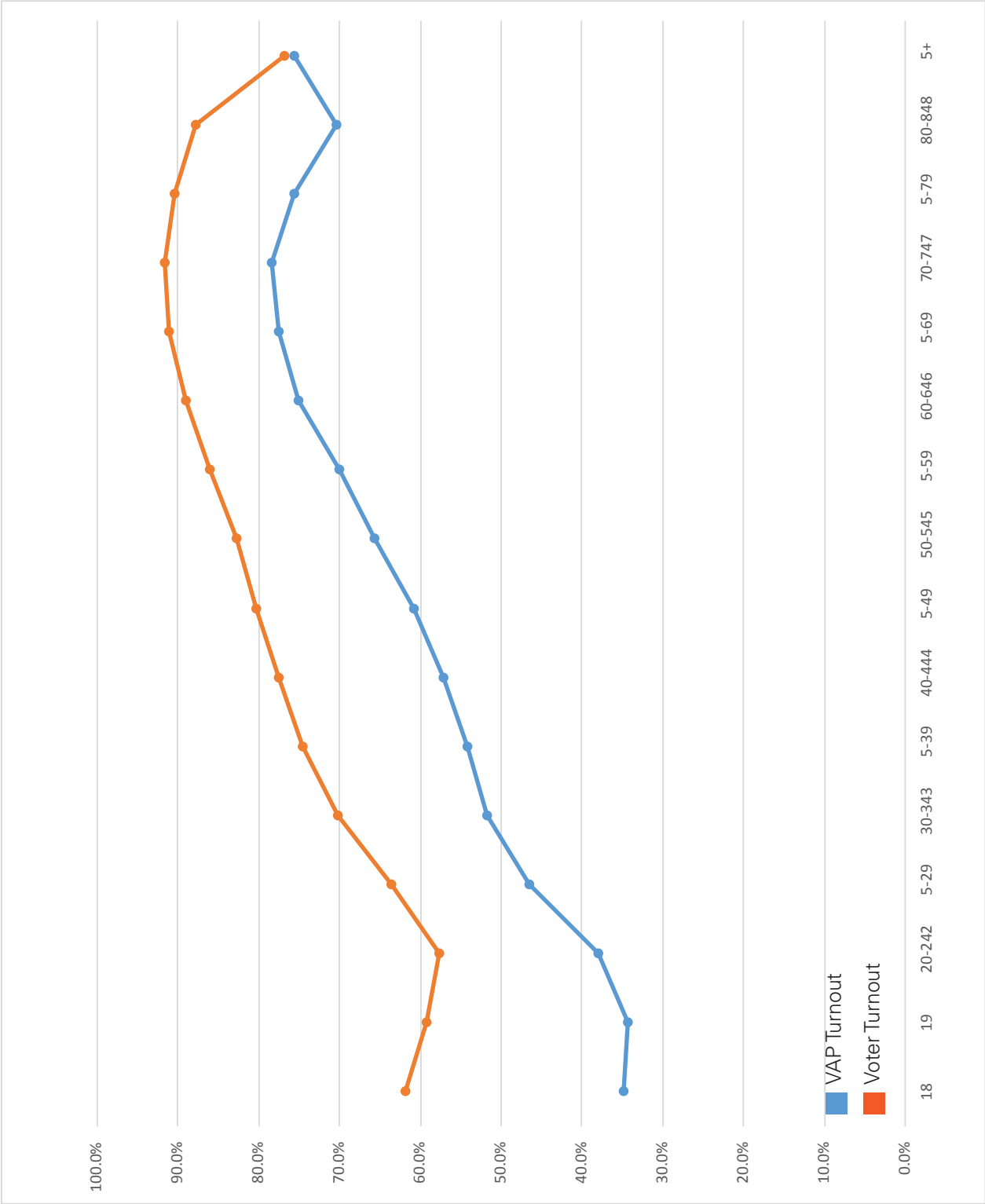
Reasons Why Not Registered or Voting

Every two years the Survey of the Performance of American Elections (SPAEE) is published by the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project. Included in this survey is the opportunity for the respondent to indicate why they aren't registered or why they didn't vote.

Of those surveyed in Washington, 41.1% selected the reason "Not interested in the election or not involved in politics" as why they are not registered to vote.

Of those surveyed in Washington, 36.9% selected the reason "Didn't like candidates or campaign issues" as why they were registered but didn't vote in 2016.

Voting Age Population Turnout by Age Group



National Comparison

State by State

Data Points and Sources

Using data obtained from the EAVS, United States Census Voting and Registration Survey (VRS), Harvard's Survey of the Performance of American Election (SPAЕ), United States Elections Project, and each state's election division information we are able to compare each state on the following data points:

- Disability- or illness-related voting problems. (VRS)
- Mail ballots rejected. (EAVS)
- Mail ballots unreturned. (EAVS)
- Military and overseas ballots rejected. (EAVS)
- Military and overseas ballots unreturned. (EAVS)
- Online registration available.
- Post-election audit required.
- Provisional ballots cast. (EAVS)
- Provisional ballots rejected. (EAVS)
- Registration or absentee ballot problems. (VRS)
- Registrations rejected. (EAVS)
- Residual vote rate. (Elections Project)
- Voting eligible population turnout. (Elections Project)
- Eligible voter registration rate. (VRS)
- Voting information lookup tools (voter registration status, polling places, sample ballots, ballot status, and provisional ballot status) (state elections division)
- Voting wait time. (SPAЕ)

Each of these data points are also used as part of MIT's Election Performance Index¹³ (EPI) that is published following each even year election. The EPI also produces visualizations of this data state by state for easy comparison.

Due to the length of the table, it has been split between two pages.

2016 Report of Elections in Washington State

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State	Rejected Registrations	Registration or absentee ballot problems	Disability or illness Related Voting Problems	Voter Registration Rate	Turnout	Voting Wait Time	Residual vote rate	Military and Overseas Ballots Rejected	Military and Overseas Ballots Unreturned	Mail Ballots Rejected	Mail Ballots Nonreturned	Provisional Ballots Cast	Provisional Ballots Rejected	Postelection Audit Required	Voting Info Lookup Tools	Online Registration Available
AK	11.2%	5.4%	12.1%	87.5%	61.8%	12.8	99.2%	8.4%	87.6%	0.3%	86.8%	6.1%	0.1%	Yes	3 of 5	No
AL	1.6%	5.1%	22.1%	86.2%	59.3%	6.9	99.5%	4.1%	61.9%		90.0%	0.6%	0.3%	No	4 of 5	No
AR	3.4%	4.6%	20.1%	83.7%	53.1%	5.5	99.4%	10.7%	83.1%	0.2%	92.1%	0.4%	0.3%	No	3 of 5	No
AZ	4.1%	6.3%	8.2%	80.9%	56.2%	15.6	97.9%	2.8%	81.7%	1.0%	81.4%	4.7%	0.8%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
CA	15.9%	7.9%	11.4%	79.8%	58.4%	6.5	97.1%	4.7%	70.7%	0.4%	70.8%	9.1%	1.4%	Yes	1 of 5	Yes
CO	3.3%	6.1%	6.9%	90.0%	72.1%	2.4	97.2%	1.6%	59.8%	0.8%	77.8%	0.2%	0.1%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
CT	0.0%	3.3%	19.7%	86.5%	65.4%	5.8	98.1%	1.8%	81.7%	0.2%	102.0%	0.0%	0.0%	Yes	3 of 5	Yes
DC	0.5%	3.2%	20.4%	93.6%	61.1%	4.9	99.6%	5.3%	81.0%	0.0%	77.8%	1.1%	0.5%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
DE	7.6%	4.0%	17.8%	87.0%	64.6%	20.0	99.7%	4.2%	80.4%	0.0%	88.1%	0.1%	0.1%	Yes	5 of 5	Yes
FL	6.0%	6.0%	13.1%	87.0%	65.7%	7.1	98.3%	3.3%	69.6%	0.2%	78.3%	0.3%	0.1%	Yes	3 of 5	No
GA	0.3%	6.0%	14.7%	83.3%	59.9%	17.3	98.8%	8.1%	72.6%	0.3%	89.9%	0.4%	0.2%	No	5 of 5	Yes
HI	12.1%	7.1%	9.7%	71.9%	43.0%	5.0	98.0%	2.6%	77.4%	0.3%	87.2%	0.2%	0.2%	Yes	3 of 5	No
IA	0.6%	1.6%	9.0%	85.8%	69.0%	7.9	99.0%	5.7%	78.9%	0.3%	96.9%	0.2%	0.0%	No	3 of 5	No
ID	0.0%	2.4%	13.1%	78.0%	60.9%	6.9	97.1%	14.9%	84.9%	0.1%	97.0%			No	0.75	No
IL	3.4%	4.2%	12.7%	88.4%	63.4%	19.3	97.7%		0.0%	0.1%	88.1%	0.5%	0.2%	Yes	3 of 5	Yes
IN	6.6%	5.2%	17.4%	81.4%	57.9%	4.2	97.4%	2.0%	91.2%	0.1%	99.7%	0.1%	0.1%	No	5 of 5	Yes
KS	0.0%	5.5%	13.7%	80.8%	59.7%	5.7	96.6%	1.2%	84.1%	0.4%	91.2%	3.3%	1.1%	No	3 of 5	Yes
KY	67.2%	4.0%	16.5%	83.0%	59.7%	7.3	98.4%	4.3%	54.1%	0.1%	89.6%	0.0%	0.0%	No	3 of 5	No
LA	5.3%	4.2%	18.1%	86.4%	60.6%	12.7	99.0%	6.3%	58.0%	0.1%	78.5%	0.2%	0.2%	No	5 of 5	Yes
MA	3.3%	6.5%	19.2%	87.7%	68.3%	3.6	98.4%	1.0%	82.8%	0.2%	89.3%	0.2%	0.2%	No	4 of 5	No
MD	0.2%	5.5%	16.0%	88.5%	67.2%	15.5	99.1%	7.6%	74.9%	0.1%	77.9%	2.8%	0.3%	Yes	5 of 5	Yes
ME	1.1%	1.0%	14.3%	87.7%	72.8%	5.3	96.9%	4.0%	87.6%	0.3%	97.7%	0.0%		No	0.75	No
MI	0.1%	3.1%	13.6%	88.9%	65.7%	8.5	98.5%	2.6%	78.2%	0.1%	93.9%	0.0%	0.0%	No	4 of 5	Yes
MN	0.1%	2.0%	15.3%	88.7%	74.8%	6.8	99.2%	7.8%	76.7%		92.5%			Yes	5 of 5	Yes
MO	0.5%	5.7%	17.0%	85.4%	62.3%	8.8	99.9%	1.6%	73.8%	0.2%	95.3%	0.2%	0.1%	Yes	3 of 5	Yes
MS	0.2%	7.5%	18.7%	87.0%	55.6%	13.8	100.0%	0.9%	61.4%	0.1%	94.1%	1.8%	0.4%	No	2 of 5	No
MT	0.6%	4.8%	8.4%	82.2%	64.3%	4.1	96.2%	0.8%	85.0%	0.2%	94.9%	1.5%	0.1%	Yes	4 of 5	No
NC	10.6%	7.2%	16.4%	88.0%	65.2%	6.5	99.4%	1.3%	81.2%	0.1%	84.4%	1.3%	0.7%	Yes	5 of 5	No
ND	0.0%	2.4%	10.0%	83.6%	61.9%	10.4	98.4%	3.3%	86.5%	0.2%	95.0%			Yes	5 of 5	Yes
NE	0.2%	6.7%	10.2%	85.6%	63.8%	5.7	98.1%	4.7%	81.5%	26.9%	96.1%	1.9%	0.4%	Yes	4 of 5	No
NH	0.0%	1.6%	15.5%	86.8%	72.5%	7.4	98.5%	4.9%	87.8%	0.2%	96.5%			No	0.75	No
NJ	1.1%	5.0%	16.5%	86.8%	65.5%	5.5	97.9%	1.1%	81.0%	0.3%	86.4%	1.4%	0.3%	No	4 of 5	No
NM	9.2%	6.4%	14.2%	75.5%	55.2%	9.0	99.3%	0.3%	79.9%	0.0%	88.1%	0.7%	0.4%	Yes	2 of 5	No
NV	12.0%	4.8%	11.9%	80.4%	57.3%	14.0	100.0%	1.4%	86.4%	0.1%	84.4%	0.6%	0.4%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
NY	6.3%	4.7%	14.4%	83.1%	57.3%	5.7	99.2%	8.7%	90.5%	0.3%	81.2%	3.4%	1.5%	Yes	2 of 5	Yes

Accessibility and Voter Tools

Washington has the lowest percentage of disability or illness related voting problems in the nation.

States with more voting information tools (4 of 5 or better) had a better voting eligible population (VEP) turnout of 63.2% compared to states with 3 of 4 or worse which had a VEP turnout of 59.3%. Washington State currently has all 5 voting information lookup tools which are: voter registration status, polling places, sample ballots, ballot status, and provisional ballot status

Same Day Registration / Election Day Registration

In 2016 11 states offered in-person Election Day registration¹⁴. On average, those states had a 65.4% VEP turnout which is below what Washington achieved in 2016. The max VEP turnout amongst states that offered Election Day registration was 74.1% and min VEP turnout was 59%.

Four states offered in-person registration that was cut-off 7 days or less before Election Day, those states averaged a 62.8% VEP turnout. The 34 states that cut-off in-person registration at 9 days or more (most at 20 days or more) averaged 58.6% VEP turnout.

Historical data for registration deadlines by state was not available at the time of this report.

Youth Pre-registration

In 2016, 14 states had pre-registration¹⁴ of either 16 & 17 year olds or only 17 year olds. In the five states that offered pre-registration for 17 year olds, turnout was highest with 64.4% of the VEP turning out. States that offered 16 & 17 year old pre-registration had 60% and states with no pre-registration had 58.6%.

Since 2012, three states (California, Colorado, and Louisiana) have started to offer pre-registration of 16-17 year olds. Only in Colorado did the VEP turnout rise (from 70.6% to 71.8%). In California (from 55.7% to 54.8%) and Louisiana (from 60.8% to 60.4%) it dropped.

Three states (District of Columbia, Florida, and Hawaii) have offered pre-registration of 16-17 year olds since 2008. In all three states, VEP turnout declined in 2016 and only Florida had a higher VEP turnout than Washington (65.61% in FL vs 65.58% in WA).

No new states have started offering 17 year old pre-registration since 2012.

Recommendation

Passage of a bill allowing for 17 year olds to pre-register to vote along with civic education

¹⁴ - Data obtained from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the United States Election Project, and state election websites.

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State	Rejected Registrations	Registration or absentee ballot problems	Disability or illness Related Voting Problems	Voter Registration Rate	Turnout	Voting Wait Time	Residual vote rate	Military and Overseas Ballots Rejected	Military and Overseas Ballots Unreturned	Mail Ballots Rejected	Mail Ballots Nonreturned	Provisional Ballots Cast	Provisional Ballots Rejected	Postelection Audit Required	Voting Info Lookup Tools	Online Registration Available
OH	5.7%	5.6%	12.2%	81.6%	64.2%	7.0	98.0%	1.5%	80.6%	0.2%	93.8%	2.8%	0.4%	Yes	2 of 5	Yes
OK	6.8%	7.8%	15.3%	78.3%	52.4%	17.1	99.1%	5.2%	65.5%	0.2%	82.9%	0.5%	0.4%	No	5 of 5	No
OR	0.0%	13.9%	8.9%	88.6%	68.3%	0.7	97.3%	1.9%	76.6%	0.9%	80.3%	0.0%	0.0%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
PA	9.4%	4.0%	15.2%	82.1%	63.6%	11.3	99.1%	2.7%	75.5%	0.0%	91.1%	0.4%	0.2%	Yes	3 of 5	No
RI	0.0%	4.4%	18.4%	85.9%	59.7%	8.0	98.8%	0.0%	80.5%	0.2%	93.1%	0.8%	0.4%	No	5 of 5	No
SC	0.0%	4.9%	17.3%	83.3%	57.3%	21.1	99.0%	0.6%	79.6%	0.1%	97.8%	0.5%	0.2%	Yes	5 of 5	Yes
SD	0.0%	6.2%	10.0%	84.2%	59.9%	4.4	97.7%	5.9%	69.9%	0.1%	99.3%	0.1%	0.0%	No	4 of 5	No
TN	7.3%	7.8%	14.3%	78.5%	51.2%	10.2	98.5%	4.3%	78.9%	0.0%	90.8%	0.5%	0.3%	Yes	3 of 5	No
TX	5.4%	5.3%	11.8%	80.3%	51.6%	11.6	99.9%	6.9%	69.6%	0.2%	91.2%	0.8%	0.6%	Yes	2 of 5	No
UT	5.7%	8.2%	12.1%	81.3%	57.7%	11.7	98.2%	4.6%	55.2%	0.6%	70.9%	3.1%	0.4%	Yes	5 of 5	Yes
VA	8.5%	6.5%	16.8%	86.5%	66.1%	1.8	99.7%	6.3%	81.3%	0.1%	94.5%	0.3%	0.2%	Yes	5 of 5	Yes
VT	1.0%	4.4%	7.2%	86.7%	64.8%	11.1	98.3%	4.9%	95.9%			0.0%	0.0%	Yes	1 of 5	No
WA	1.1%	8.9%	3.4%	87.2%	65.7%	1.7	98.6%	2.2%	56.7%	0.9%	77.3%	0.2%	0.0%	Yes	4 of 5	Yes
WI	0.2%	1.9%	15.9%	84.2%	69.4%	7.3	101.1%	0.6%	71.6%		88.1%			Yes	5 of 5	No
WV	0.2%	5.2%	21.6%	77.5%	50.1%	5.4	97.6%	1.2%	76.5%	0.0%	91.3%	0.4%	0.1%	Yes	4 of 5	No
WY	0.0%	3.3%	7.8%	79.5%	60.4%	5.5	98.9%	2.3%	77.9%		96.8%			Yes	1 of 5	No

Automatic Voter Registration

For the 2016 General Election only the State of Oregon had Automatic Voter Registration enacted according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) website. VEP turnout and eligible voter registration rate could be good measurements to use to evaluate this area. Without much historical data to compare to, only the comparison with 2012 can be made.

The eligible voter registration rate¹⁵ in 2016 for Washington was 87%. Good enough for 12th in the nation and, for comparison, the State of Oregon was 5th with 88%. In 2012, Washington was 18th in the nation with a 78% eligible voter registration rate and the State of Oregon was 8th with 88%.

Based active voters obtained from the EAVS and VEP published by the United States Election Project, Washington had 83.5% of the VEP registered to vote which was 1.4% lower than the State of Oregon. Unfortunately, due to inconsistency with how active voters are reported and voter roll maintenance, we are unable to identify with certainty how well these rates are compared to all other states. The United States Election Project estimates that the State of Oregon ranks 31st in the nation and Washington is 38th in percentage of VEP registered.

The voting eligible population turnout in 2016 for Washington was 65.6% which was 10th in the nation and the State of Oregon with 5th with 69.3%. In 2012, Washington was 9th in the nation with a 65.8% eligible voter registration rate and Oregon was 13th with 64.2%.

Alaska and Colorado report that they will be implementing automatic voter registration in 2017. California, Colorado, Connecticut, D.C., Rhode Island, West Virginia and Vermont offer "automatic" voter registration that allows the individual the opportunity to opt-out at the point of contact with the DMV. All states are required to at least provide the individual the opportunity to opt-in at the point of contact with the DMV. Alaska¹⁶ will be using voter registration that will be tied to a citizen's application for the permanent fund dividend. The Alaska Division of Elections receives new and updated registrations from the PFD applications and then sends a notice to new applicants or voters whose address on their PFD application is different than their voter record address. The mailer notifies them that the information on their PFD application will be used for voter registration purposes unless they opt-out within 30 days.

Recommendation

Passage of Automatic Voter Registration Bill where all Enhanced Drivers' License holders are automatically registered to vote with the opportunity to opt-out at the counter or by mail.

15 - Source is United States Census Voting and Registration Survey (VRS).

16 - Source is National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

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Pre-Registration and Registration Deadlines¹⁷

by State

State	Pre-Reg	In-Person	Mail/Online	Automatic VR
Alabama	18	15	15	Opt-in
Alaska	18	30	31/30	Opt-in
Arizona	18	29	29	Opt-in
Arkansas	18	30	30/29	Opt-in
California	16&17	15	15	Opt-out
Colorado	16&17	Election Day	8	Opt-in
Connecticut	17	7	14	Opt-out
Delaware	16&17	24	24	Opt-in
District of Columbia	16&17	Election Day	30	Opt-out
Florida	16&17	29	29	Opt-in
Georgia	18	29	28	Opt-in
Hawaii	16&17	29	29	Opt-in
Idaho	18	Election Day	25	Opt-in
Illinois	18	Election Day	28	Opt-in
Indiana	18	29	29	Opt-in
Iowa	18	10	15	Opt-in
Kansas	18	21	21	Opt-in
Kentucky	18	29	29	Opt-in
Louisiana	16&17	30	30/29	Opt-in
Maine	17	Election Day	21	Opt-in
Maryland	16&17	5	21	Opt-in
Massachusetts	18	20	20	Opt-in
Michigan	18	21	30	Opt-in
Minnesota	18	Election Day	21	Opt-in
Mississippi	18	30	30	Opt-in
Missouri	18	28	28	Opt-in
Montana	18	Election Day	30/29	Opt-in
Nebraska	17	11	18	Opt-in
Nevada	18	21	31	Opt-in
New Hampshire	18	Election Day	10	Opt-in
New Jersey	18	21	21	Opt-in
New Mexico	18	28	28	Opt-in
New York	18	25	25	Opt-in
North Carolina	18	25	25	Opt-in
North Dakota	18	N/A	N/A	Opt-in
Ohio	18	30	30	Opt-in
Oklahoma	18	25	25	Opt-in
Oregon	17	21	21	Automatic
Pennsylvania	18	30	30	Opt-in
Rhode Island	16&17	Election Day	30	Opt-out
South Carolina	18	30	30	Opt-in
South Dakota	18	15	15	Opt-in
Tennessee	18	30	30	Opt-in
Texas	18	30	30	Opt-in
Utah	18	7	30	Opt-in
Vermont	18	6	6	Opt-out
Virginia	18	22	22	Opt-in
Washington	18	8	29	Opt-in
West Virginia	17	21	21	Opt-out
Wisconsin	18	Election Day	20	Opt-in
Wyoming	18	Election Day	14	Opt-in

17 - States showing 31/30 or 30/29 - if the last day falls on a Sunday, the deadline is moved to the Saturday before. (31st to 30th or 30th to 29th, for example.) Information from Vote.org at <https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-deadlines/>