

The Right to Vote in the U.S.

The most fundamental aspect of modern democracy is that the people choose who governs.

Federal system: How you vote depends a lot on which state you live in.

United States of America

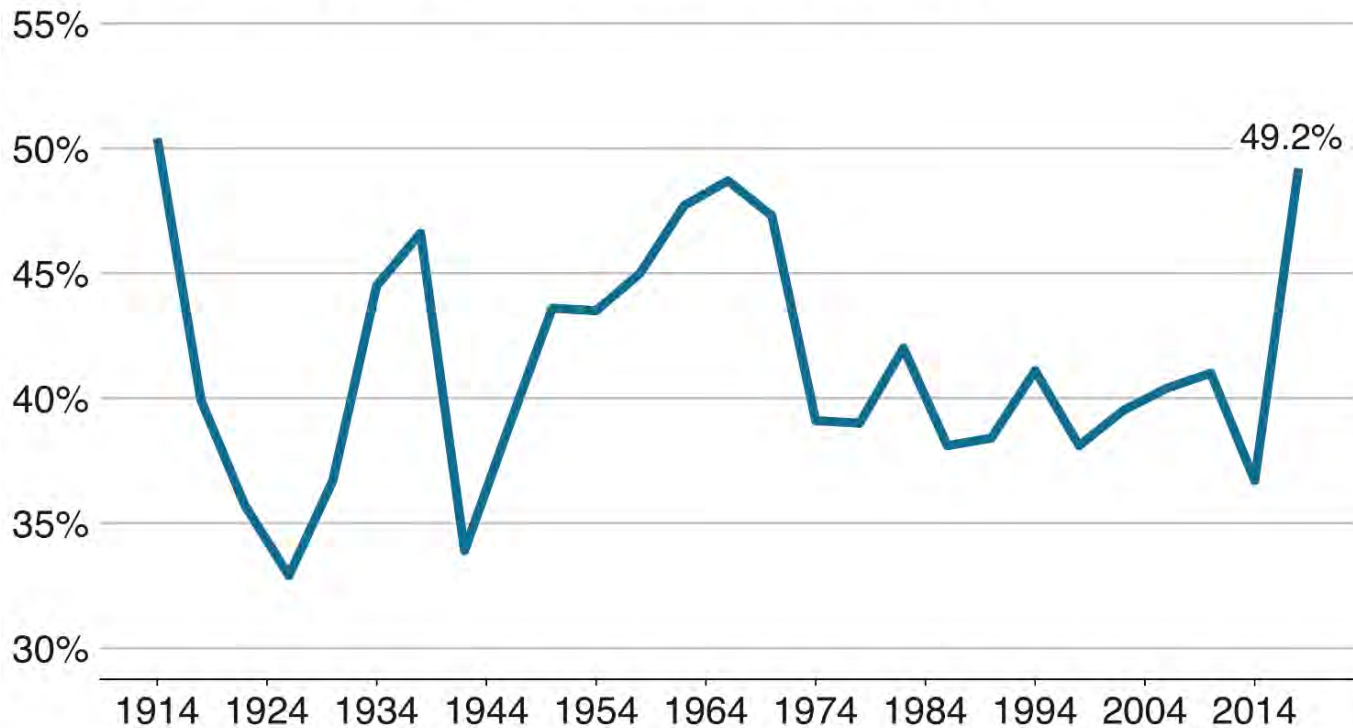


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Highest turnout for 104 years

Voter turnout for midterm elections, 1914-2018



Source: US Election Project. Voters as proportion of voting-eligible population

BBC

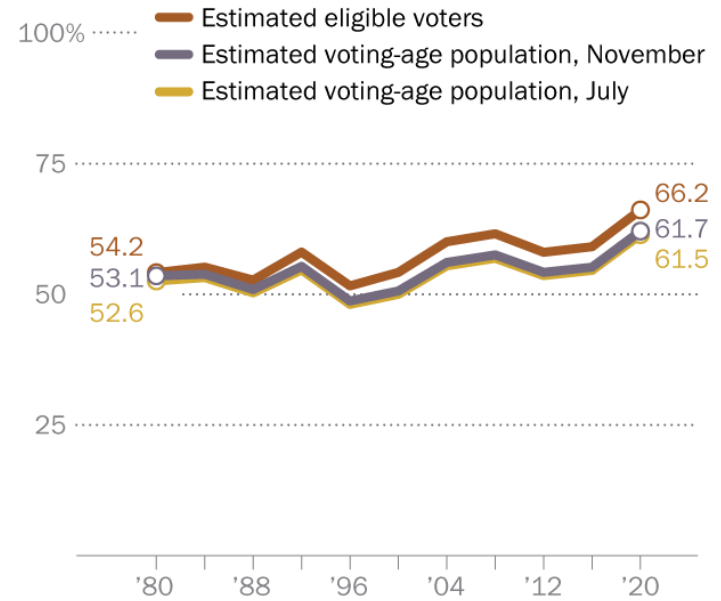
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46119736>



Record Turnout in November 2020

However you measure it, voter turnout jumped in 2020

Votes cast in U.S. presidential race as % of indicated population



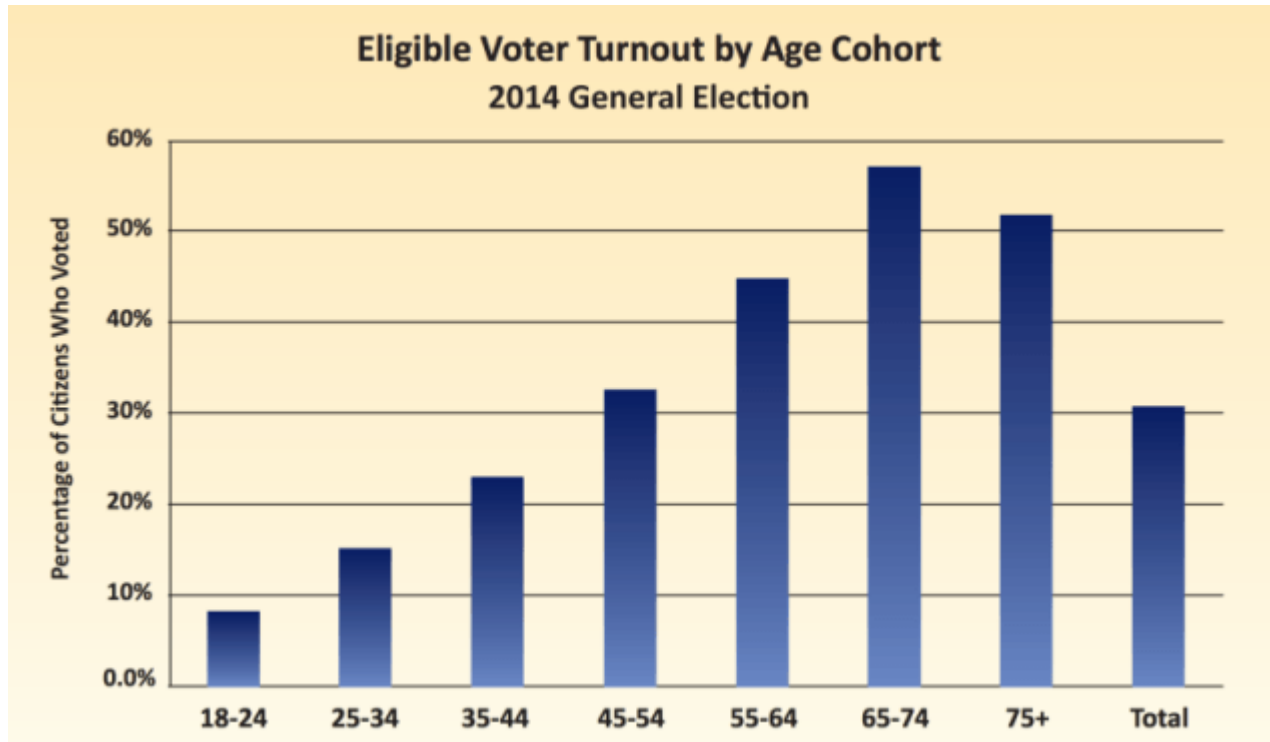
Note: July estimates of voting-age population are taken from Census Bureau reports. November estimates are derived by Michael McDonald from Census data. Eligible voter estimates are derived by McDonald by adjusting the November estimates to subtract noncitizens and ineligible felons and add overseas citizens. Presidential vote totals are Pew Research Center tabulations.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, United States Election Project. Vote totals come from official state sources, Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections and Clerk of the House of Representatives.

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Factors that affect who is likely to
vote

Factors affecting turnout: Age



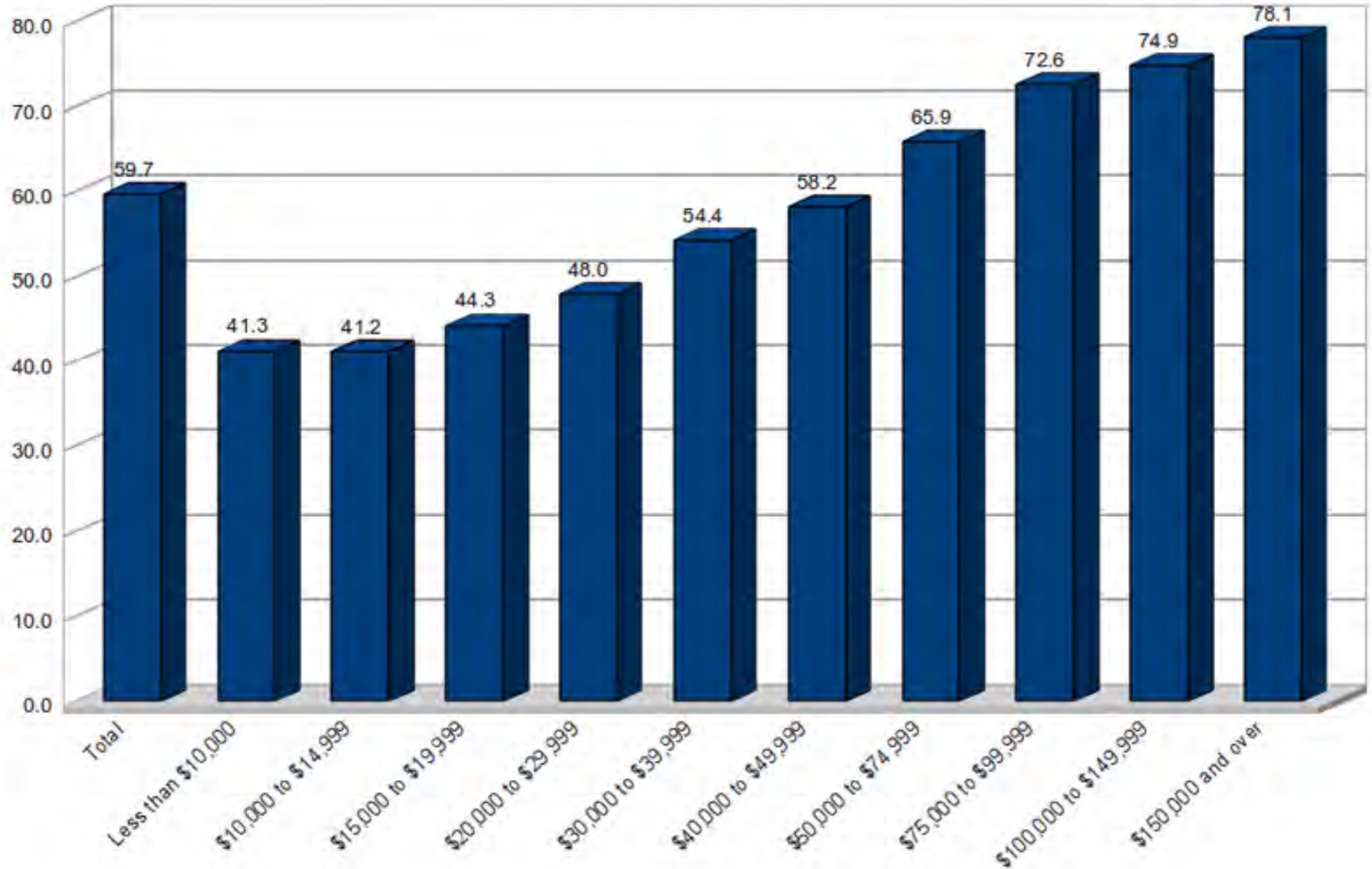
Turnout among various age groups in California's November 2014 election, as compiled by UC Davis researchers (*UC Davis Center for Regional Change*)

Factors affecting turnout: Socioeconomic Status



Voter Turnout by Income, 2008 US Presidential Election.

Source: US Census Bureau.



Factors affecting turnout: Election laws and procedures



County of Sacramento
Statewide Special Election
October 7, 2003

Candidates Continued / Candidatos Continúa

54	DOUGLAS ANDERSON, Republican Mortgage Broker/Agente hipotecario
55	IRIS ADAM, Natural Law Business Analyst/Analista empresarial
56	BROOKS ADAMS, Independent Business Executive/Ejecutivo de empresa
57	ALEX-ST. JAMES, Republican Public Policy Strategist/Estratega de política pública
58	JIM HOFFMANN, Republican Teacher/Maestro
59	KEN HAMIDI, Libertarian State Tax Officer/Funcionario impositivo estatal
60	SARA ANN HANLON, Independent Businesswoman/Mujer de negocios
61	IVAN A. HALL, Green Custom Denture Manufacturer/Fabricante de dentaduras postizas a medida
62	JOHN J. "JACK" HICKEY, Libertarian Healthcare District Director/Director de distrito de atención de la salud
63	RALPH A. HERNANDEZ, Democratic District Attorney Inspector/Inspector de fiscalía
64	C. STEPHEN HENDERSON, Independent Teacher/Maestro
65	ARIANNA HUFFINGTON, Independent Author/Columnist/Mother/Esritora/columnista/madre
66	ART BROWN, Democratic Film Writer/Director/Guionista y director de cine
67	JOEL BRITTON, Independent Retired Meat Packer/Impacador de carne jubilado
68	AUDIE BOCK, Democratic Educator/Small Businesswoman/Educadora/propietaria de pequeña empresa
69	VIK S. BAJWA, Democratic Businessman/Author/Entrepreneur/Hombre de negocios/padre/empresario
70	BADI BADIOZAMANI, Independent Entrepreneur/Author/Executive/Empresario/escriitor/ejecutivo
71	VIP BHOLA, Republican Attorney/Businesswoman/Abogado/propietario de empresa
72	JOHN W. BEARD, Republican Businessman/Hombre de negocios
73	ED BEYER, Republican Chief Operations Officer/Funcionario principal de operaciones
74	JOHN CHRISTOPHER BURTON, Independent Civil Rights Lawyer/Abogado de derechos civiles
75	CRUZ M. BUSTAMANTE, Democratic Lecturer/Governor/Vicegobernador
76	CHERYL BLY-CHESTER, Republican Businesswoman/Environmental Engineer/Mujer de negocios/ingeniera ambiental
77	B.E. SMITH, Independent Lecturer/Conferenciista
78	DAVID RONALD SAMS, Republican Businessman/Producer/Writer/Hombre de negocios/productor/escritor

Candidate listing continues on next page /
La lista de candidatos continua en la página siguiente →


34 3-003 Ballot Type - 001 Pg. 10

Factors affecting turnout:

Election Laws and Procedures

- What procedures are necessary for ensuring a legitimate election?
- When are procedures designed to reduce voter turnout?
- Some procedures
 - Voter registration requirements
 - Same day or earlier deadline?
 - In person or mail-in or online?
 - Automatic registration?
 - Voting process (can be more or less difficult)
 - Voter requirements like voter ID
 - Number of polling places
 - Early Voting
 - Absentee or mail-in ballots

Factors affecting voting: Election Laws and Procedures

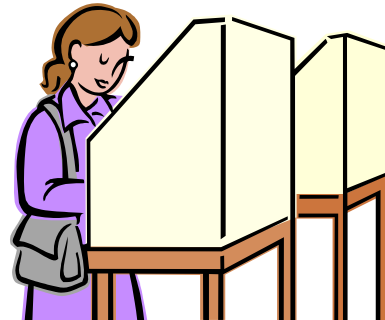
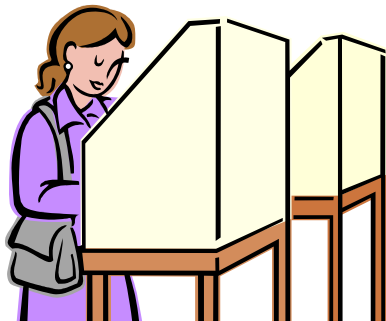
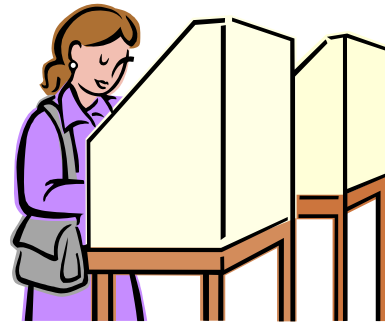
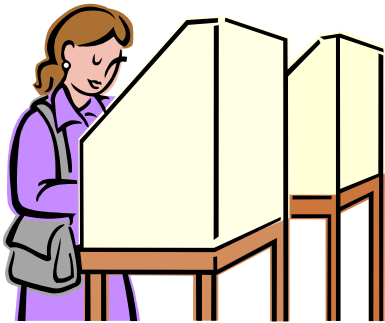
- Electoral System
 - Proportional Representation
 - Single-member plurality or First-past-the post 
 - Ranked-Choice Voting

Factors affecting turnout:
Election Day Holiday?



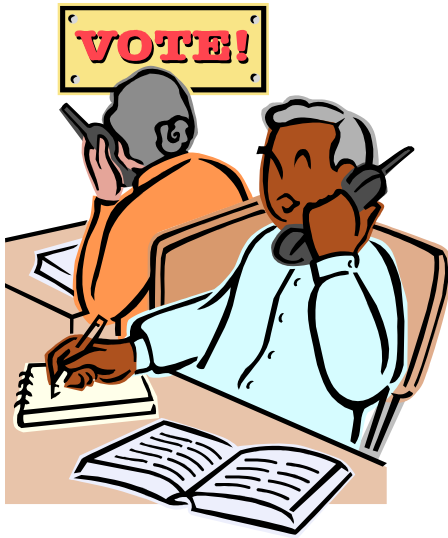


Factors affecting turnout: frequency of elections





Factors affecting turnout: Mobilization





Factors affecting turnout: negative campaigning



Factors affecting turnout: Compulsory Voting?



Constitutional and Historical Background

U.S. Constitution: Article I, section 2:

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, *and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.*

Early Suffrage

- Property requirements
 - Wealth or property necessary in order to vote
- Mostly white men
- Some women and blacks could vote early in the “Republic”
 - New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts, if met criteria like property and residency requirements

Amendments to the Constitution

Constitution amended to state what could not be used to keep people from voting:

15th Black male suffrage (1870): right to vote “shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.”

19th Female suffrage (1920): right “to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

24th Poll tax prohibited (1964)

26th 18 year-olds can vote (1971): right to vote of those “who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.”

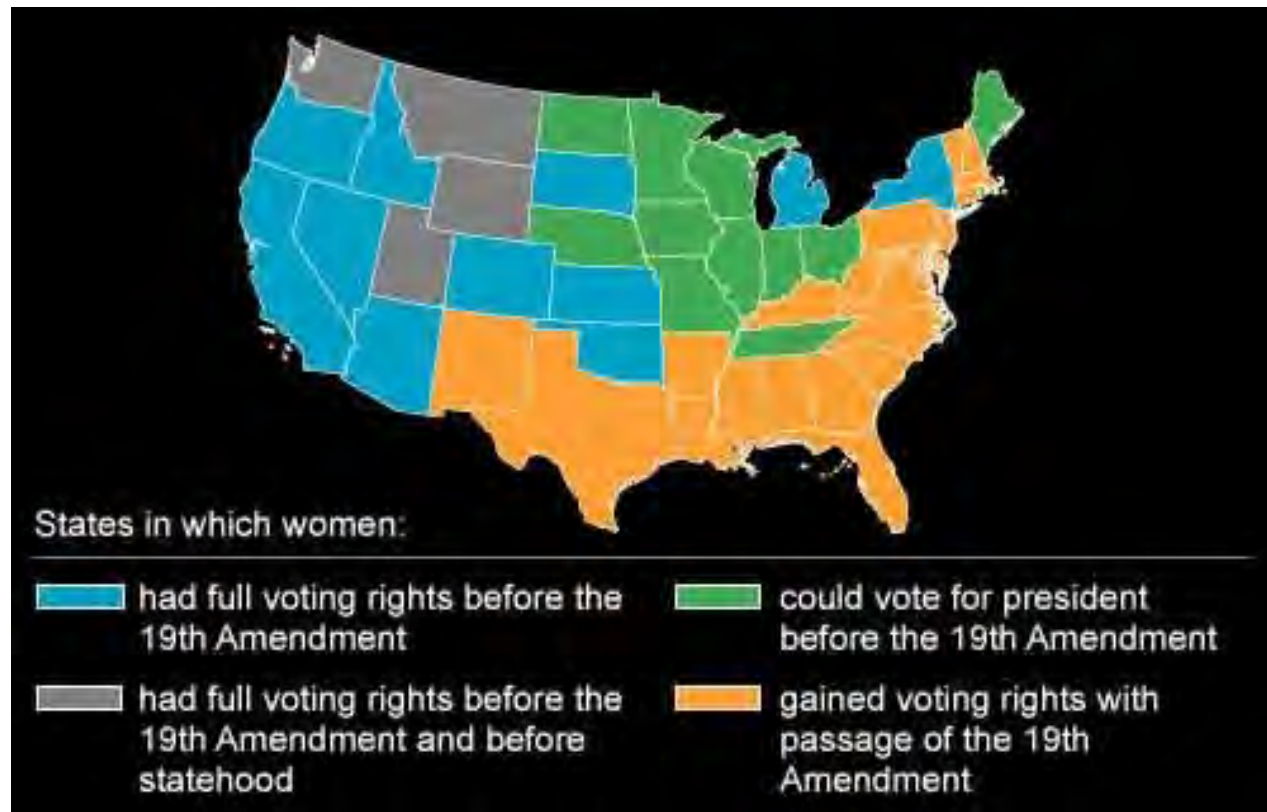
Women's Suffrage

A few notes about women's right to vote in the United States

Voting Rights: Sex/gender

- Women's suffrage movement was connected with abolitionist movement
- Seneca Falls Convention, 1848
 - Seminal women's rights convention
 - Women had been banned from an abolitionist convention
- Women expected to be included under the 15th amendment
 - A schism occurred between white women suffragists and advocates for black suffrage and civil rights
- Voting rights established nation-wide in 1920 with 19th Amendment
- Women *could* run for office, and some tried
 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton ran unsuccessfully for office in 1866
 - Jeannette Rankin was elected as Montana's representative in the US House of Representatives in 1917 (first woman elected to Congress)

Women's suffrage

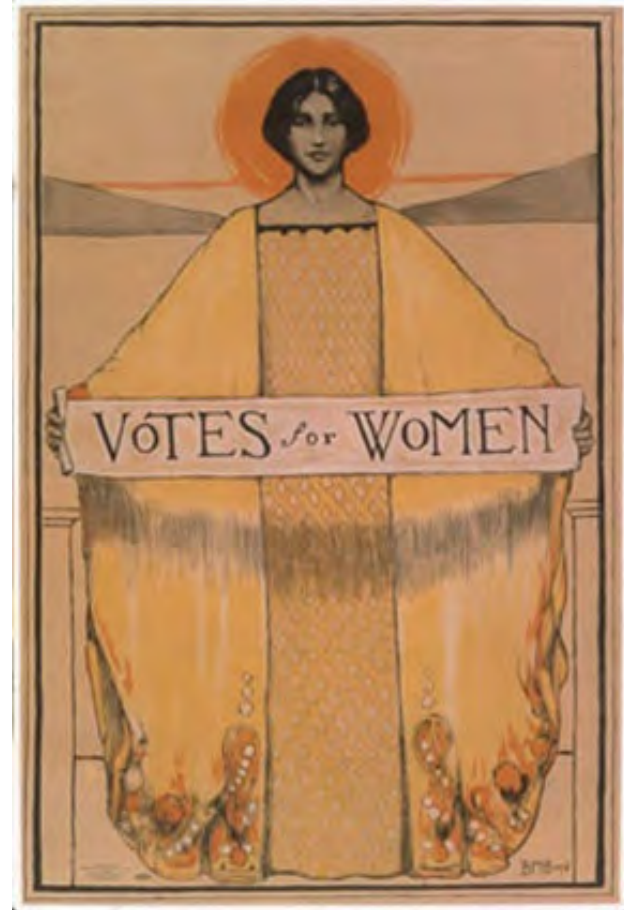


From: http://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08_12159.html

California

Women's suffrage approved in 1911

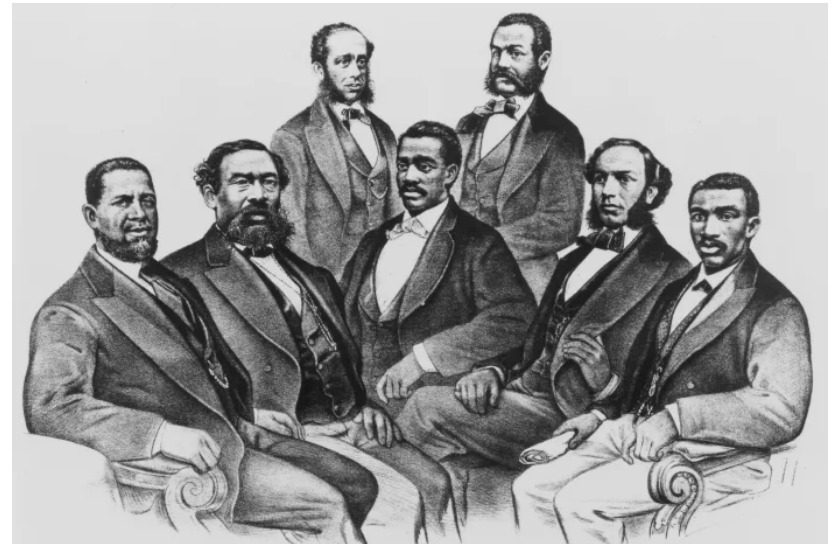
- Passed with 3,587
 - An average of one vote per precinct in the state
- Lost in San Francisco!
- Passed in rural areas
- California was 6th
 - Wyoming had been first
 - Women could vote in Wyoming when it was a territory
 - Wyoming joined the U.S. as a state in 1890



African-American Right to Vote

Reconstruction

- During Reconstruction after the Civil War (1865-1877)
 - Southern states forced to extend suffrage to black men
 - Black representatives elected to state and national office
 - The picture is of the African-American men in national office:
 - U.S. Senator Hiram Revels
 - Congressmen (House of Representatives)
 - Benjamin S. Turner
 - Robert C. De Large
 - Josiah T. Walls
 - Jefferson H. Long
 - Joseph H. Rainey
 - R. Brown Elliot
 - The above are national: Blacks were also elected to state legislatures in the South



After Reconstruction: systematic strategies designed to keep blacks from voting included

Laws



Voting requirements and procedures

Criminalization of activities



Felonies for minor offenses,
disenfranchisement

Violence



Threats, lynching (extrajudicial murders)



Examples of legal voter suppression strategies

- “Give us a [constitutional] convention, and I will fix it so that... the Negro shall never be heard from” – former Georgia senator Robert Toombs*
- “We now have the rule of a minority of 400,000 [whites] over a majority of 600,000 [blacks]... The only thing that stands today between us and their rule is a flimsy statute – the Eight Box Law” – South Carolina Governor John Richardson (1888)*
 - The Eight Box Law, passed in 1882, created an intentionally complicated ballot designed to keep blacks from effectively voting.

*See presentation notes for source.

Legal procedures used to suppress of African-American votes

- Methods:
 - White primaries
 - Literacy tests
 - [Sample literacy test](#) (see next slide)
 - Poll taxes
 - Gerrymandering districts
 - Why didn't literacy tests and poll taxes affect white voters?
 - "Grandfather" clauses
- E.g.: about 500,000 blacks lived in Mississippi in the 1940s – how many were registered to vote?
 - 2,500

Sample literacy tests

SAMPLE

(35)

"B"

1. Has the following part of the U. S. Constitution been changed?
"Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state, excluding Indians not taxed." No
2. Which of the following is one of the duties of the United States Internal Revenue Service?
 passing legislation
 x collection of income taxes
 giving welfare checks
3. There are three main types of city government in Alabama. Name one. Mayor Council
4. Law requires that "In God we trust" be placed on all money issued in the United States. True.

SAMPLE

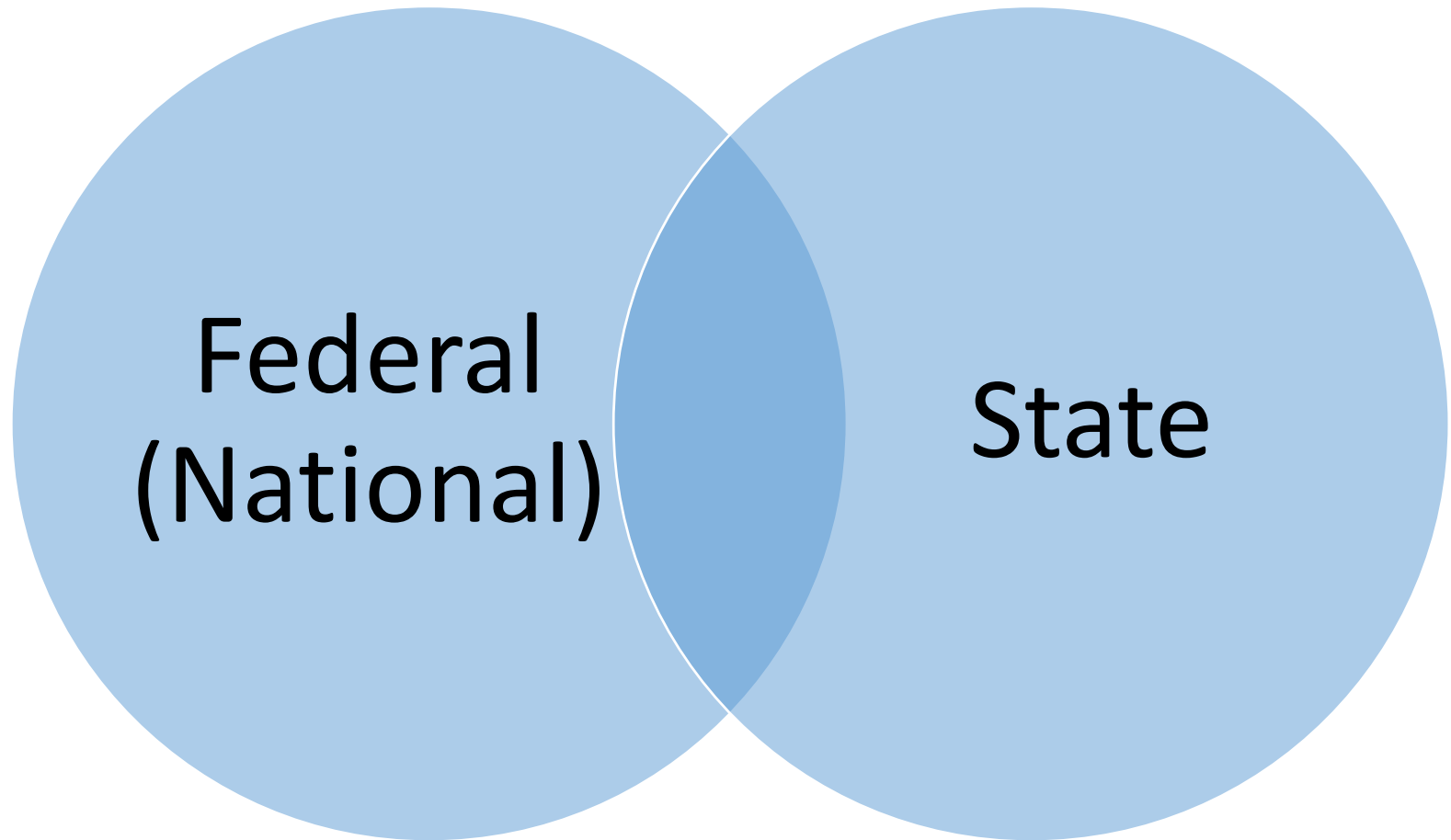
SAMPLE

(38)

"B"

1. What body can try impeachments of the president of the United States? Senate
2. Check the applicable definition for responsibility:
 X a duty
 a speech
 failure
3. Name the attorney general of the United States. Nicholas Katzenbach (acting)
4. Women may now serve on juries in Alabama State courts. True.

Federalism: national action to guarantee rights for U.S. citizens





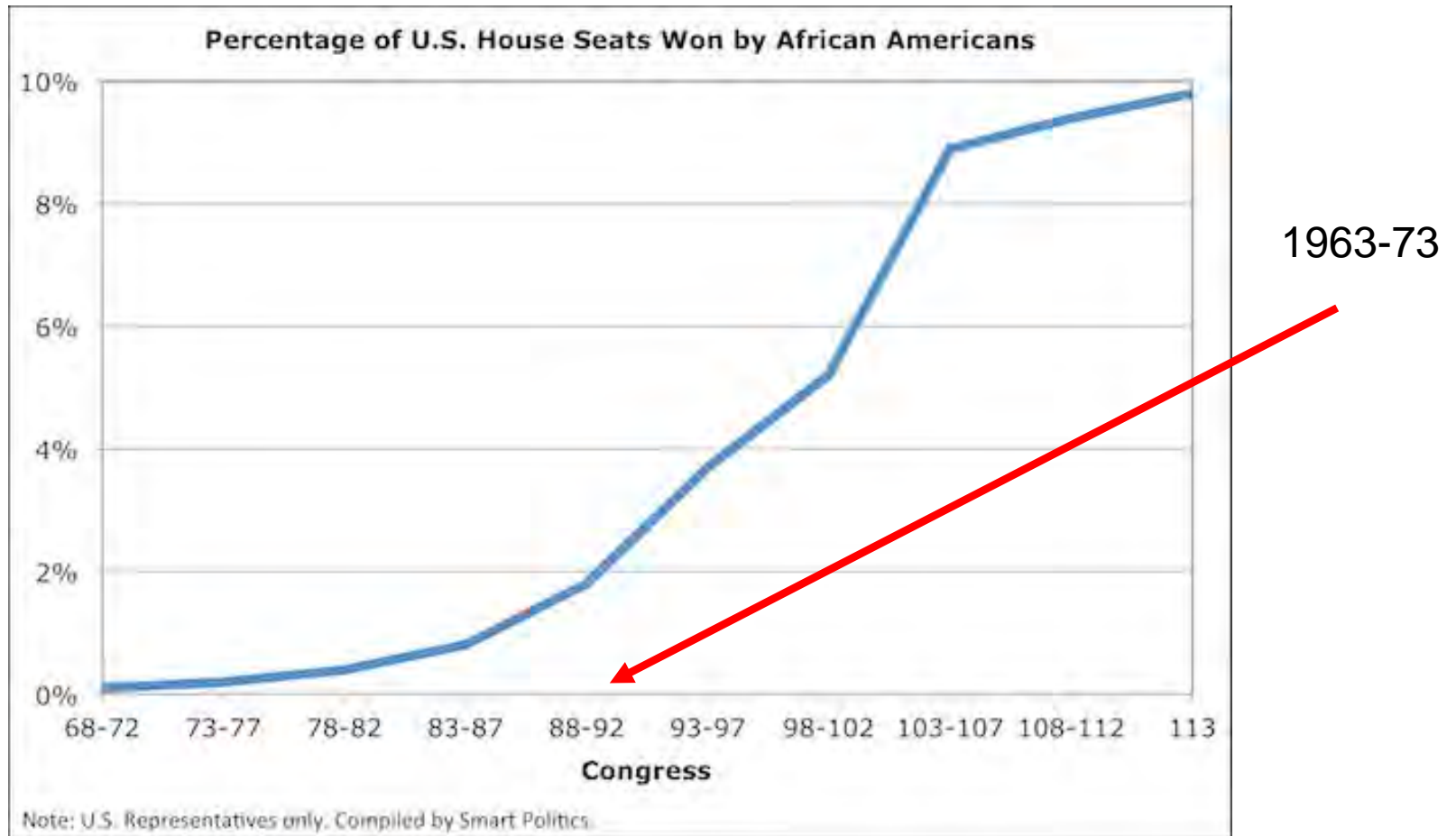
Civil Rights Act 1964

- Reasons for passage
 - Civil Rights Movement
 - Decades of legal work
 - Protests and attempts at integration
 - Including March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963
 - 250,000 participants
 - Martin Luther King, Jr., speech
 - Support in Congress (northern & Western Democrats)
 - Despite opposition, including Senate filibuster (55 days!)
 - Presidential support (Lyndon Johnson)

Voting Rights Act of 1965

- This Act allowed: federal agents to register voters and oversee election rules in states
- Prohibited literacy tests
- Upheld in various court cases
 - Katzenbach v. Morgan, 1966 [<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1965/847>]
- Part “overturned” by Supreme Court in 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder*

Congress 1923-2015

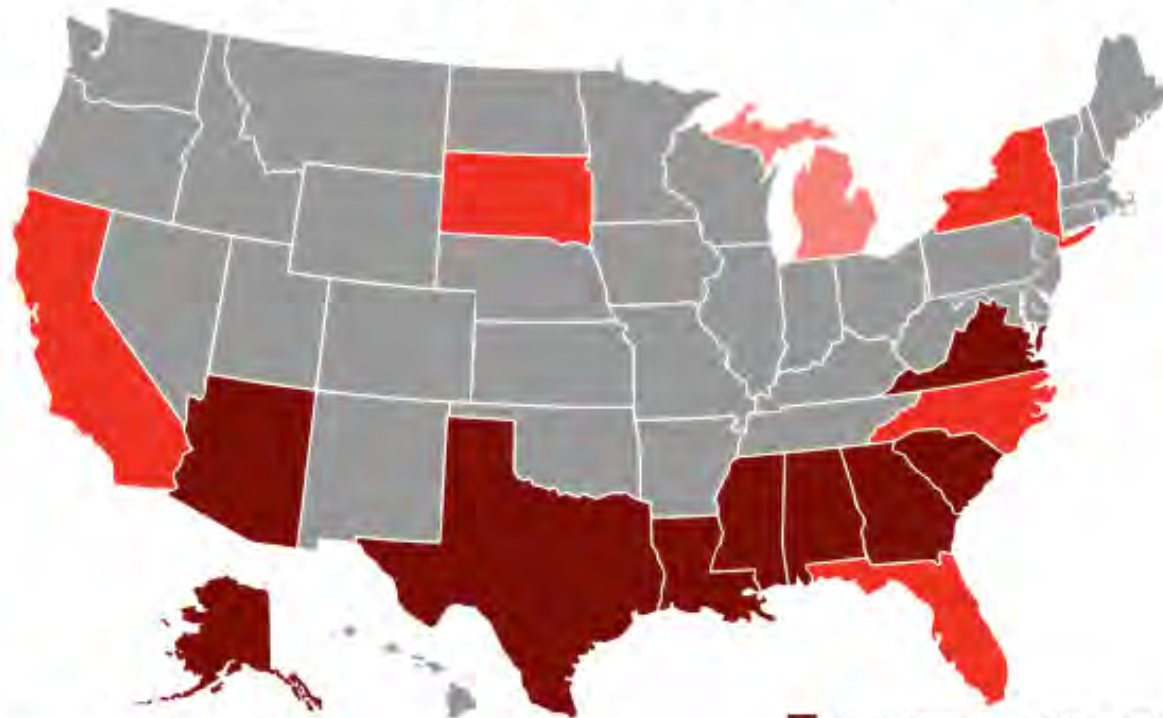


From Eric Ostermeier, "African-American Representatives by the Numbers" *Smart Politics* (August 28, 2013) <http://editions.lib.umn.edu/smartpolitics/2013/08/28/african-american-us-representa/>

Shelby County v. Holder

August 4, 2018

States Covered by Section 5 at the time of the Shelby County Decision

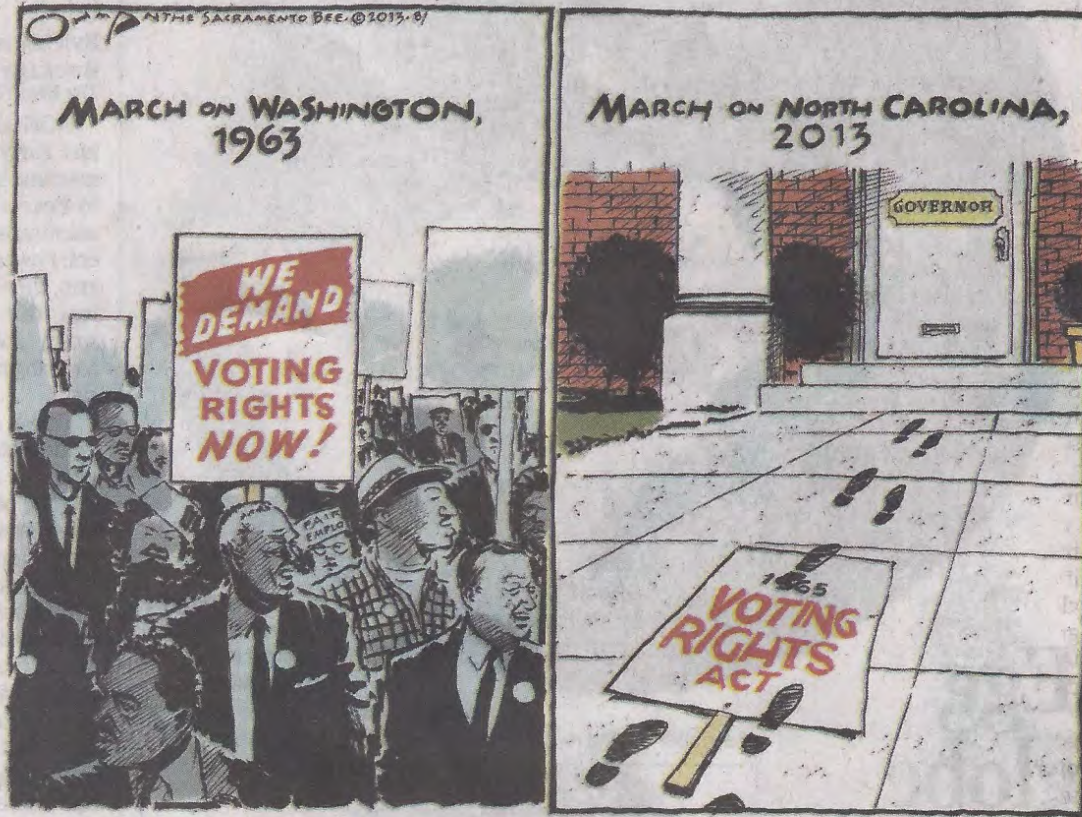


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FOR JUSTICE

- States Covered as Whole by Section 5
- Some Counties Covered by Section 5
- Some Townships Covered by Section 5

The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 to ensure state and local governments do not pass laws or policies that deny American citizens the equal right to vote based on race. On June 25, 2013, the Supreme Court swept away a key provision of this landmark civil rights law in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

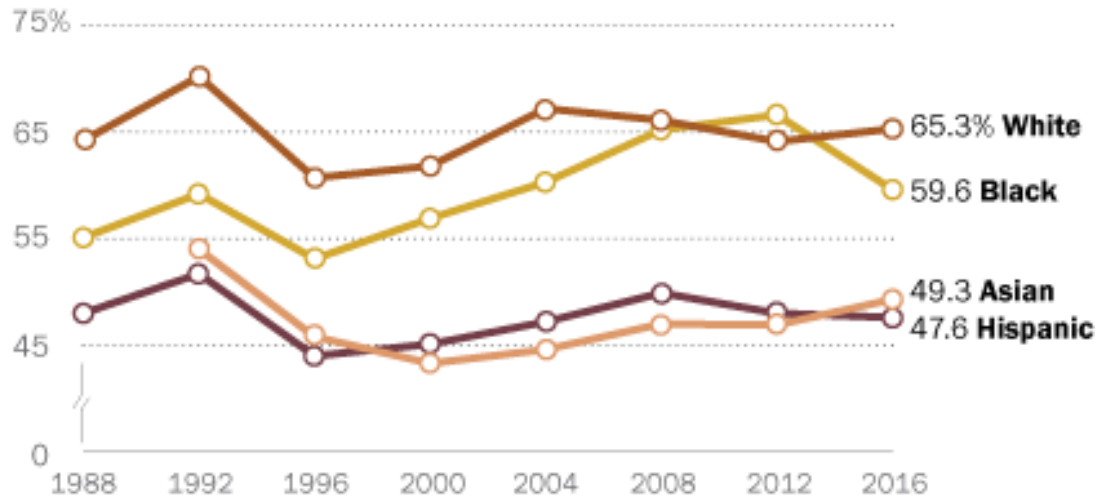
JACK OHMAN | johman@sacbee.com



Shelby County v. Holder <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96>
Supreme Court ruled against part of Voting Rights Act of 1965

Black voter turnout rate declined sharply in 2016, dropping below that of whites

% of eligible voters who say they voted



Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Data for non-Hispanic Asians were not available in 1988.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey, November Supplements for 1988-2016.

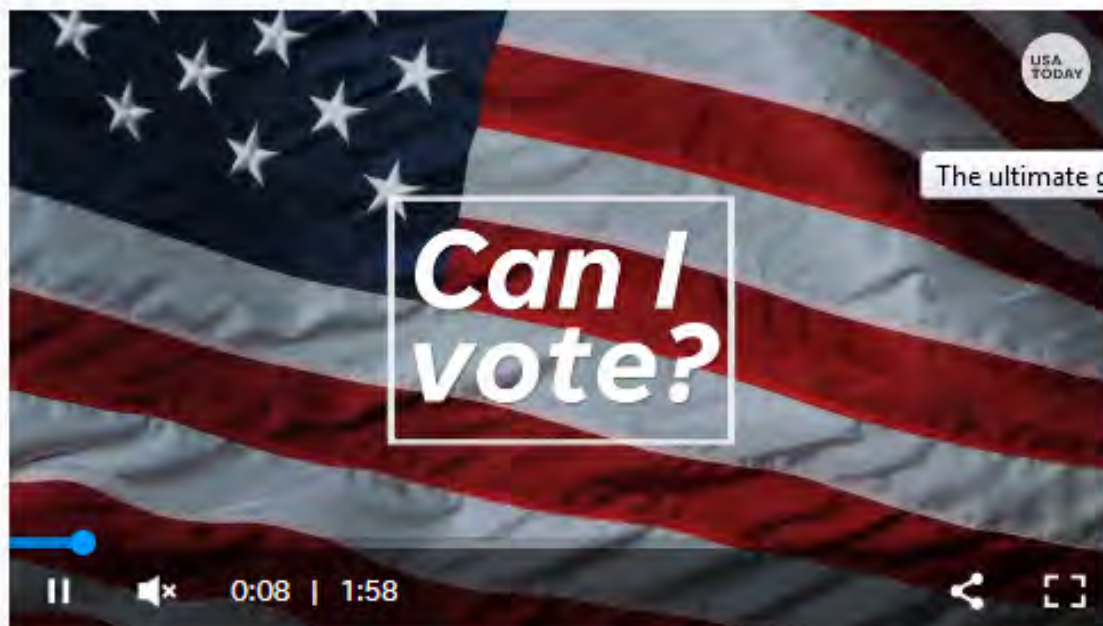
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Closed voting sites hit minority counties harder for busy midterm elections

Mark Nichols, USA TODAY

Published 7:06 a.m. ET Oct. 30, 2018 | Updated 11:58 p.m. ET Oct. 30, 2018



This simple checklist will help make sure your vote counts. USA TODAY

The ultimate guide to voting in 2018



Replay



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the nearly 500 people who voted at the home will take advantage of early voting instead.

In Maricopa County, Ariz., election officials decided to save money by closing 140 polling locations before the 2016 election. The result: confusion, long lines and frustrated voters at sites across Phoenix – the state's capital and a majority-minority city. The county also lost about 270 poll workers.



Long lines at fewer polling places plagued the 2016 vote across the Phoenix region. People wait in line to vote in the primary at the Environmental Education Center on March 22, 2016, in Chandler, Arizona. (Photo: David Kadlubowski, Arizona Republic)





Alva Gabe, who has lived in Standing Rock her whole life and voted in every election since 1984, shows her new tribal ID with a street address, which will allow her to vote in North Dakota. Photograph: Dan Koeck/Getty Images for The Guardian

Who could vote in Florida (<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voter-registration/register-to-vote-or-update-your-information/>) **Before 2019**



The Division of Elections facilitates coordination and interpretation of election laws and establishes uniform standards to ensure fair and accurate elections in Florida.

[About Us](#) [Candidates & Committees](#) [Data & Statistics](#) [For Voters](#) [Forms & Publications](#) [Laws & Rules](#) [Voting Systems](#) [Contacts](#)

Para español, seleccione de la lista Powered by Google Translate

[Department of State](#) / [Division of Elections](#) / [For Voters](#) / [Voter Registration](#) / [Register to Vote or Update your Information](#)

Register to Vote or Update your Information

Who Can Register to Vote

To register to vote in Florida, you must:

1. Be a Citizen of the United States of America (A lawful permanent resident, commonly referred to as a "green card holder," does not have the right to register or vote in Florida);
2. Be a Florida resident;
3. Be at least 18 years old (You may pre-register to vote if you are 16 years old);
4. Not have been adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting in Florida or any other state without having the right to vote restored;
5. Not have been convicted of a felony without your civil rights having been restored.

FOR VOTERS

- Election Dates
- Quick Facts - General Election
- Special Elections
- Voter Education Toolkit
- Voter Information Lookup
- Voter Registration**
 - Closed Primary Election
 - National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)
 - Online Voter Registration
 - Register to Vote or Update your Information**
 - Third Party Voter Registration

Who can Vote in California

From California Secretary of State's website (<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/who-can-vote-california/>)



Voting in California

Who Can Vote in California

Registering to Vote

Where and How to Vote

Election Dates
and Resources

County Elections Offices

Reaching New Voters

Voting in California

Contact Information

New Voter Information

New Voter Information

Información para
nuevos votantes

[Home](#) » [Elections and Voter Information](#) » [Voting Resources](#) » [Voting in California](#)

Who Can Vote in California

All Registered Voters Can Vote in a Primary or General Election

To register to vote in California, you must be:

A United States citizen and a resident of California,

18 years old or older on Election Day,

Not currently in state or federal prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony (for more information on the rights of people who have been incarcerated, please see the Secretary of State's [Voting Rights: Persons with a Criminal History](#)), and

Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court (for more information, please see [Voting Rights: Persons Subject to Conservatorship](#)).

Qualifications to Pre-register to Vote

To pre-register to vote in California, you must:

Be 16 or 17 years old, and

Meet all of the other eligibility requirements to vote.

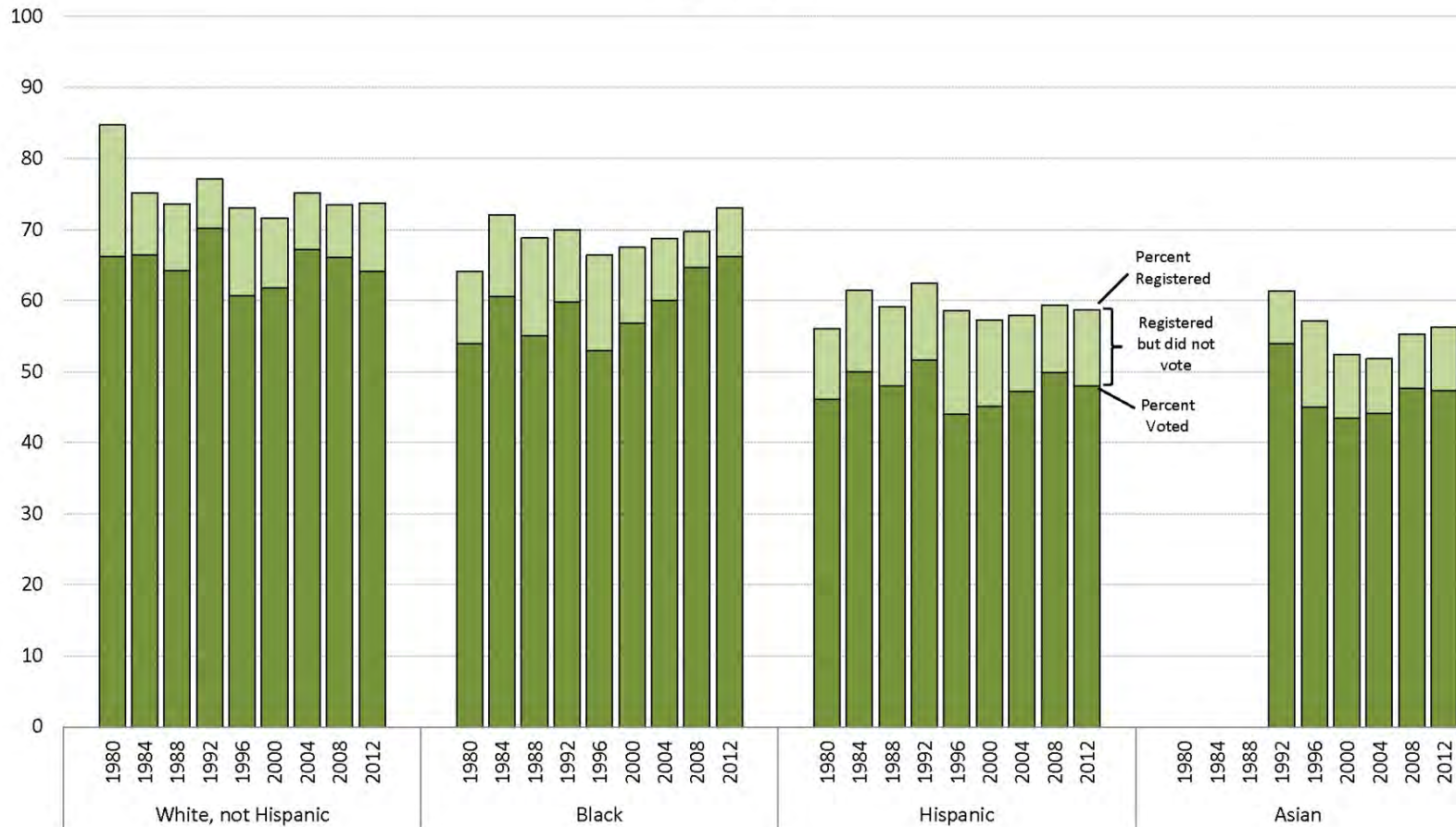
You will automatically be registered to vote on your 18th birthday.

More information about rights of those who have been incarcerated

- <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/felon-voting-rights.aspx>

Some More Data About Voting in the United States

Percent Registering and Voting by Race and Hispanic Origin: Presidential Elections



Note: Percent of the citizen civilian noninstitutionalized population, age 18 and over.

Source: Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Supplements, historical table A-6.

Available: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/index.html>

Does my vote count?

Georgia Presidential Election November 2020

- Results:
 - Donald J. Trump: 49.25% of the vote
 - Joseph R. Biden: 49.51% of the vote
- Georgia conducted recounts to confirm result
- Georgia's 16 Electoral College votes went to Biden

Georgia Senate Runoff

What happened

- In the state of Georgia, U.S. Senate candidates need an majority to win or there is a runoff
- In November 2020, neither candidate received an absolute majority (one was a special election, usually there are not two at one time)
- Perdue and Loeffler were the incumbents, which usually is an advantage

Results of January 5, 2021 runoff

- US Senate (regular election)
 - Jon Ossoff (Dem): 50.61%
 - David A. Perdue (Rep): 49.39%
- US Senate (special election)
 - Raphael Warnock (Dem): 51.04%
 - Kelly Loeffler (Rep): 48.96%
- Results from:
 - <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/107556/web.264614/#/summary>



The winners in Georgia Senate Race

**Raphael Warnock: First Black Senator
from Georgia**



Jon Ossoff

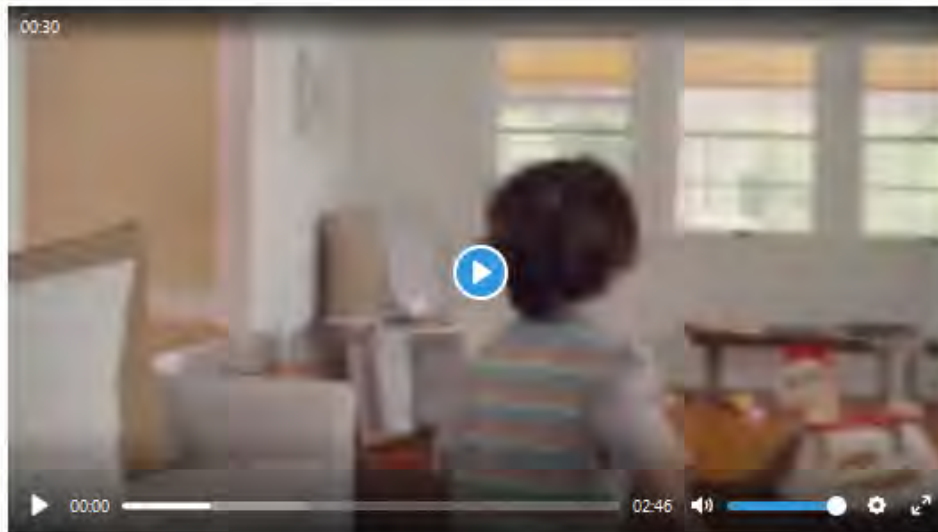


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POLITICS

San Francisco District Attorney race too close to call

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The San Francisco District Attorney's race remains too close to call between acting District Attorney Suzy Loftus and progressive challenger Chesa Boudin.

 By Lauren Martinez

Updated an hour ago

SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- San Francisco Mayor London Breed's hand-picked candidate is leading the race for District Attorney by the slimmest of margins.

Chesa Boudin, a public defender, was in the lead as of last night, but after three rounds of ranked-choice voting results this morning, Suzy Loftus, Mayor Breed's pick, is now leading. Loftus has 47,234 votes and Boudin has 46,994 votes -- that's only a difference of 240 votes between them.

RELATED: [Ranked-choice voting explained](#)

<https://abc7news.com/politics/san-francisco-district-attorney-race-too-close-to-call/5675863/>

Sacramento County Sheriff Election

- Sheriff Scott Jones re-elected June 2018 with 145,740 votes out of 284,099 cast in the election.
- The number of registered voters in Sacramento County was 740,537. About 42% voted in the 2018 primary.
 - About 20% of the registered voters in Sac County voted for Sheriff Jones
- The population of Sacramento County is about 1.5 million.
 - About 1% of the population of Sacramento County voted for Sheriff Jones



Primary Elections and Choices

- Usually no candidate wins outright in the primary
- In some cases, if a candidate wins a majority of the vote in the primary, the candidate has won the election:
 - City Council
 - Mayor
 - Sheriff
 - County Supervisor
- Therefore, Scott Jones won re-election in the June primary when he received a majority of the vote and was not on the ballot in November
- Similarly, Katie Valenzuela won a majority in the March 2020 primary election for Sacramento City Council and was not on the ballot in November 2020.